

Change your mind

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Change your mind

by [winterlighting](#)

Summary

Clay took a step closer, the boy did as well. He cupped his cheeks, skin against skin.

And just like that, the world stopped.

It was like an explosion, a big bang of emotions. It was everything he didn't know lacked, everything he didn't know needed, but had always been craving. And as the world faded around him, he could see it clearer than ever.

It was him. Its always been him. Because who else could have been?

In retrospect, it was inevitable. He couldn't see it before, but now it was clear as day. This was always the outcome for them. It was always how they would end up.

They were soulmates.

“It’s you” he whispered, thumbs gently caressing the pale skin under them.

“Makes sense.” It did. It made so much sense. Nothing in his life has ever made more

sense. "Soulmates can be platonic." George shrugged.

And the world stopped again.

or Dream and George find out they are soulmates, but they aren't quite sure if it's the romantic or platonic kind

Seeing

Chapter Notes

not gonna lie, now that time has passed and im more comfortable with my writing, i dont really like this fic all that much. i dont like the pacing, and i feel like the characterization isnt the best. overall i feel like i couldve done better with this plot. so who knows, i might rewrite it at some point.
to everyone who decides to read this, i apologize if the quality is different from my other fics. i was still testing the waters about writing and ive always been better at george's pov

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The light of the screen was the only thing keeping the room from complete darkness. The voices of characters repeating boring dialogues filled the silence. An occasional humming or snorting coming from his computer, and his own sighs and comments over the all-too-expected scenes playing.

It was just another badly written film. The same plot he's seen in movies over and over. Two people meeting by chance. An instant spark. But they can only be friends, one of them already being in a relationship. Life, however, had plans for them. So the formed couple gets to an unsurprising end, falling out of love as it's 'no longer the same'. And the two protagonists get together after, as they were always supposed to. 'True love conquers all'. A familiar premise reused one too many times. A premise that, sadly, actually resembled reality.

Through his life, Clay watched multiple people fall in and out of love. The incredible strong feeling that once pulled you close to a person, fading into ashes of *what could have been* but *didn't feel right anymore*.

A cycle, always repeating itself. The excitement of new feelings, the honeymoon phase, the getting used to one another, and the inevitable heartbreak. The classic lines of '*it's not you, it's me*' and '*it wasn't meant to be*'. Or the disappointment and hurt of seeing them choosing someone else.

That last thing wasn't unfamiliar to him. Clay experienced it himself, the pain and sorrow of betrayal and being left. And his friends and family always said the same, the most comforting line they've ever learned to say: They weren't the one.

The one.

Because there was, indeed, someone in the world that would be a perfect fit. The one that's *meant to be*, when '*you*' and '*me*' becomes *we* because together everything is just *better*. At some point of your life, you will find them. And you will never feel alone again.

... A promise to some, a threat to others.

It was something that's been with him ever since he was a kid: The knowledge that out there, there was one person that perfectly suited you. Someone that would get you, that would understand you the most, and would never want to leave your side. The choice would still be there, not taking away free will, but no one ever decided against being close to whom destiny had bonded you to.

Because it was a connection that transcended any other.

In darkness, they would be the light. When lost, they would be a guide. When losing hope, a reason to keep trying, to keep going. Support, caring, reassurance, affection. Not your *other half*, because you don't need someone else to be complete, but a life-lasting companion to complement the feeling of being whole. A *partner*.

All you needed was a touch. One single touch, skin to skin. And you would know. You would find them.

"This movie sucks." The familiar voice interrupted his thoughts, mind focusing on the movie again and who was watching it with him.

"I mean..." He took a few seconds to try to come up with reasons to defend it, but there was none. In all honesty, why did they even pick that one? Neither of them were fans of romance films.

"Okay, yeah, it does." He let out a chuckle, his best friend laughed as well.

Clay clicked to pause the movie, closing his browser to check discord instead. He looked at the boy's icon, smiling to himself.

"Imma go to sleep," the brunet declared. He hummed in agreement. It was almost two in the morning for the British, anyway. And the sooner they slept, the sooner...

"George?" He mumbled, now the boy was the one humming. "Tomorrow."

"Tomorrow," his friend repeated.

One more day. Less than twenty hours. And they would finally be together. Years of waiting, only reaching each other with written words and the sound of their voices. Months of lawyers, applications and disappointments. The moment they had been working for, right in front of their eyes, so close to be real.

Clay got in his bed with the sense of easiness in his chest; the calmness and relief of knowing this wasn't just a dream anymore. But his head, his head was a mess. Not wanting to face reveal until they met was a choice he didn't regret, but it did make the process harder. Expectations to fill, one too many possible reactions, and the irrational fear of disappointing the boy that he kept pushing away.

He closed his eyes, determined to not overthink, and let the day he's been waiting for to finally come.

Falling asleep was hard. Waking up was too easy. Keeping himself busy until five in the afternoon to get in his car and head to the airport was almost impossible. Having Sapnap around helped, the shared excitement and the mutual need of wasting time until they didn't have to anymore. But his nerves were still eating him up, drowning in anticipation. No matter what he did, the British boy still invaded his every thought.

George, George, George.

He guessed it was normal, when you're about to meet the person you love the most in the whole world. The owner of your favorite smile, who's laughs would ever make you happy. The one that's given you your most precious memories, leaving you wanting to make more. The boy that inspired him to learn new things, changing his life in the process. His best friend.

Clay knew how to drive, and he had gotten a new car just a few weeks ago when they finally

decided on the date George would travel to the States. Yet he didn't decline Sapnap's offer of being the one to do it this time. From both of them, he was the calmest one. So he trusted him the most behind the wheel.

They got to the airport a little too early, waiting in the parking lot to avoid being recognized. Soft music played in the background, and his friend's voice as he tried to make some trivial conversation to keep him occupied. That, until *the* text message came.

George had arrived. George was there.

The blond got out of the car almost right away, showing the messages to his roommate first before texting the brunet back with the instructions of where to meet. This was happening, this was happening right now. He took a deep breath, fixing his clothes and hair before approaching the exit door of the airport, keeping a decent distance so he could see his friend coming out. He waited one minute, then two. And then, there he was.

Soft-looking, fluffy and messy brown hair, bright brown eyes scanning the area, probably looking for him. So tiny, so small, drowning in a sweater three sizes too big for him.

His breath caught in his throat, legs moving before thinking, watching the boy's confused and nervous expression as he tried to find someone he had never seen before. His footsteps cut the distance between them, heart racing the closest they got. Until finally, they stood in front of each other.

The brunet blinked. Then his eyes widened. Clay's smile grew wider under his mask. He felt like he was dying, in the best possible way.

"Dream...?"

"George!" His arms wrapped around the small body right away, the boy nervously laughing in response. "You're here! You're finally here." And if he felt like he could cry, he tried not to give in to the thought.

"I am" the brunet giggled, carefully wrapping his arms around him as well. And god, he wanted nothing more but to lift him in the air and spin around like in those trashy movies they kept watching. "You're- you're real. You're actually real."

"I am," he giggled as well, finally pulling apart. He looked around, making sure no one was too close to them, before carefully removing his mask. George's eyes widened again, before mimicking his actions.

They stared at each other, so many words yet to be said but both too mesmerized by the other's presence to be able to talk. Both taking in all the details of the other's faces, memorizing their features and the way they changed when they smiled.

George was even more gorgeous in person, that was for sure.

He took a step closer, the boy did as well. And then big hands sought the small boy's face, needing to feel him, to prove himself this was indeed not a product of his imagination. He cupped his cheeks, skin against skin. And just like that, the world stopped.

'So... How does it feel? How do you know?'

'Well, it's like... Everything in your life suddenly makes sense. There's no missing pieces anymore. It just... It just clicks. You just know.'

Clay took a sharp breath, heart beating out of his chest. It was like an explosion, a big bang of emotions inside him. It was everything he didn't know lacked, everything he didn't know needed, but had always been craving. It was the affection that never ceased to grow, reaching his heart and filling it full. It was all the pretty colors, and the most beautiful music, and all things soft and everything he loved.

And as the world faded around him, he could see it clearer than ever. It was *him*. It's *always* been him. Because who else could have been?

All the shared laughter, all the trusted secrets and whispered sins. All the promises and future plans; all the wishes and hopes of a life shared together. The three a.m. phone calls, the never-ending discord ones. The daily messages, and occasional pictures. The adventures they shared from far away, the adventures they dreamed of experiencing face to face.

Everything they said to each other. Everything said between lines.

'You'd prefer it here.'

'Why?'

'Because I'm here.'

Missing someone you've never been with. Missing a presence you've never had. Because even miles away, even if only interacting online, he was the person that made him feel less alone.

A reason to smile every morning, a reason to stay up at night. Wanting to spend all their time together, in every way they could find. Because it was them, and they were always seeking each other. Because no matter how many close friends they had, it would never compare to the feeling they gave one another.

'What do you think my weakness is?'

'Me.'

And Clay would do anything for him. He would wait for him, declining meeting other friends and putting a stop to daily life things like going out just so George could be the first one to see him. Just so he could save that special moment, for his most special person. Clay would do absolutely anything in this life for him. He would give him heaven and earth, even hell if he asked, and everything in between.

And George would wait for him too, declining offers of learning new things so Dream could be the one to teach him, staying true to their promises no matter how silly they were. George would wait for him, not forcing the blond to step out of his comfort zone and be the one to meet him in England, instead fighting the legal battles to be the one coming to him. George would change his whole life for him. Crossing an ocean, leaving everything behind, to start over by his side.

'What are three things I can't live without?'

'Me, me, and me.'

He knew the moment they met, his life would finally be complete. He knew the brunet was what he needed, for everything to feel right and perfect and how it was meant to be. Oh how could he have been so stupid? How could he have been so *blind*? It was him, it's always been him.

George had always been the prettiest boy he's ever seen. George had always been the smartest, the

brightest, a person to admire. George had always been the reason for his chest to get warm, the reason to smile at a screen, a reason to patiently wait after every end call just to talk again. But he was so much more than that. And it's not like he never thought about it, about what all those warm feelings meant. It's not like he was clueless, and didn't notice the butterflies he gave him. It's not like the *more than friends* thought never crossed his mind. He thought about it once, maybe twice. Or ten times.

Or a thousand more, sometimes.

But he had thought it was just the normal questioning, when everyone around you keeps pairing you with someone you truly care about. He thought, at most, could be a silly *crush*. Something he easily pushed away to the back of his mind, something he didn't give a second thought. Because their friendship was the most important thing for him, and he thought just having that was more than enough, more than okay.

Oh, how could he have been so stupid? How could he have been so blind?

In retrospect, it was inevitable. And he couldn't see it before, but now it was clear as day. This was always the outcome for them. It was always how they would end up. It was meant to be. It was written in the stars. They were *soulmates*.

"It's you," he whispered, thumbs gently caressing the pale skin under them.

Those beautiful brown eyes were wide open, kissable lips slightly parted in surprise, his expression showing he was still processing. He couldn't blame him. It was a lot to take in. A lot that now seemed obvious from the start, but they could both sin of stupidity from time to time. But at last, his best friend features relaxed, letting out a scoff.

"Makes sense." *It did*. It made sense. It made *so* much sense. Nothing in his life has *ever* made more sense than this. "Soulmates can be platonic." George shrugged.

... And the world stopped again.

His breath got stuck in his throat.

A blink, another one.

What?

The boy pulled away, laughing awkwardly and shaking his head, as if he was told some kind of *joke* that caught him by surprise. And all the blond could do was stare.

Soulmates can be platonic.

That wasn't a lie. Technically, there wasn't anything in the description of a soulmate that made romantic feelings mandatory. It was a life-lasting companion that would make your life better, after all. So it *could* be just friendship. It *could* stay in platonic territory and not go further than that. But when you are that close to someone, when you feel that understood and cared for... When you find the one for you, how could you *not* fall in love?

Have they *not* been falling in love since the moment they met, even if they didn't know?

"*That's* what you think we are?" Clay let out, heart on his hand and lost-looking eyes. George frowned, his features twisting as they always did when he was asked something he found strange or nonsensical.

“Obviously?”

Obviously.

So all those thoughts in the back of his head... All the feelings he could finally put a name to... All the things he is experiencing, right that second, with the new knowledge and the realization that hit him like a train... The brunet didn't have them?

“Dream?”

Clay blinked, staring at the boy. He looked at him for just a couple more seconds, before smiling again, wrapping his arms around him as before.

“I'm so happy you're here.” *Get it together. Now it's not the time.* “And I'm happy it's you.”

The boy scoffed again, but still returned the hug.

“Of course you are,” he mumbled. Always deflecting, never saying honey-filled words back. And it never hurt, yet it always did.

Clay pulled away, reaching for the boy's suitcases to help him out.

“Let's go to the car, Sapnap is waiting.”

Soft laughter resonated in the room. A house that never truly felt complete, finally full. He watched as his two friends talked, bantering about things he wasn't paying enough time to understand. Something about their rooms, or about tomorrow's lunch, maybe even both. George's eyes lighted up every time he smiled. A smile so bright he could go blind if he stared for too long. And his laugh, how could you *not* feel happy too?

The boy was graceful when he moved. Delicate, even. Always messing around on his streams and being his chaotic self, you might not get that impression, but he was careful with everything he did. When he held things, and with everything he touched. He was polite, manners always present as he walked around the house. As if he was an intruder, a visitant, and not one of the owners of the place. He was respectful with the other two's stuff, never taking anything without being told he could first. He was careful, he was caring.

And maybe all of it was normal, when you had just arrived at a new place. But to him, in his eyes, it was a wonderful scene to witness.

Clay wondered if there was anything George could do, that he wouldn't find the most fascinating thing in the world.

It wasn't a new feeling. Truth was, he's always adored him and everything he did. But now, with context, he could see how and why that wasn't too friendly. There was always a fire inside him, ready to burn his world down to ashes so a new one could be created. And now he's opened the door, and there was no coming back from it.

'Soulmates can be platonic.'

But that's not what he felt. He was ready for more, for the next step. He was ready to love and to be loved. He was ready and he *wanted* it. But if George didn't, if they weren't on the same page, then how were they going to *survive* this?

Everything they have been building would crash and crumble. Because you can't have two opposite foundations and hope that what they build wouldn't end up in ruins.

"Yo, earth to Clay." Sappnap's voice took him out of his thoughts, looking at both boys in front of him. They had just finished their dinners, or so it seemed.

"What?" The short boy huffed, the brunet let out a soft laugh.

"I said we're moving to the couch, for the anime night." The blond frowned; confusion written on his face.

"Anime- wait, what? What happened to the movie night?" Okay, maybe he had zoomed out for a little too long.

"Dude, seriously?" The boy raised an eyebrow, his best friend laughed again. "I won the bet."

What bet?

A part of him wanted to ask, a part of him didn't want to know. And honestly, he didn't want to reveal that he hadn't been paying attention at all. He simply nodded, following his friends to the living room, and sitting down on the left side of the couch, right by the brunet who was in the middle. And as the series started, he decided to try and focus, to spend quality time with the boys instead of his own thoughts. But it was hard.

Especially having his soulmate right there, so close to him for the first time.

And he tried, he really tried. He managed to watch the first episode, somewhat understanding the plot. But once the second started, and the more glances he stole to the boy sitting next to him, his mind went wild again. If Clay wanted the romance but George saw them as only friends... What would happen to their friendship? Would everything really be ruined, if he had feelings that weren't mutual?

No, they were meant to be. They wouldn't end up falling apart and losing each other. No matter what, they would always be together. Which meant, they would find a way to make it work and be happy.

Clay let the thought sink in, replaying it over and over.

Maybe he was wrong. Maybe George was onto something. They've been friends for years, and never had plans to be more. So why did that have to change, just because their souls were bonded? Maybe he was mistaken, taking those feelings he had for another kind of love. Maybe the excitement of finding *the one* made him see things in a way that weren't. Maybe he jumped into conclusions, and the warmth in his chest wasn't anything other than the happiness of finally meeting his best friend.

He could live with platonic. He's been happy with platonic, and could continue to be.

Feeling the body next to him shifting, his attention drifted to George again. He noticed how close their legs were, knees bumping into each other. Clay smiled, the hand resting by his side moving slowly and without thinking, until it grazed the boy's thigh. The brunet froze on his spot. The blond realized what he just did. And he was about to pull his hand away and whisper a quick apology, but the boy relaxed again, slightly moving closer again and leaning into his shoulder in a casual way.

Clay felt his heart race.

He knew George wasn't too used to physical contact, he knew how he rather get as little as possible as he slowly got comfortable. Yet, he wasn't pulling away. Yet, he was non-verbally inviting him to continue, telling him it was okay. The blond caressed the boy's leg lightly, just brushing his fingers against it softly. Nothing but a soothing gesture, nothing but feather-touch over clothes that was barely perceptible.

But it felt like so much more. Because George wasn't too comfortable with physical affection. But George was comfortable with him. And George didn't hate his touch. *Because* it was him. And he could leave with platonic, be happy with it even. He could put a stop to the feelings he had, until they were long forgotten.

Or.

The brunet yawned, rubbing his eyes next before glancing at Sapnap, already dead asleep at the other side of the couch.

"I think we should go to sleep," the tall boy mumbled, watching the scene as well. The boy nodded in response, yawning again before standing up. The blond stood too, walking with him to head upstairs where their rooms were.

He walked right by his side, casually swinging his hand to graze the smaller one with his fingers. And George, again, let him. And Clay had been blind, until he wasn't. So maybe George still was, too. And maybe, just maybe, he could change that. He could open his eyes.

He stopped his movements as they reached the brunet's room. The boy turned around to look at him, giving him a shy smile before he opened his mouth to say goodnight. But the blond moved closer before he could, placing both hands on the boy's cheeks, cupping them. George's eyes widened, taken back by the sudden action.

"What are you-"

"Let me look at you a little longer," he whispered, the skin under his fingers warming up slightly. "I waited for too long for this." His friend huffed, yet his face didn't show annoyance.

"Yeah, okay." Faked disinterest. As if he wasn't just as eager to examine the blond's face again as well. It was almost completely new for him, after all.

He stayed like that, close and letting him stare at his face, just for a few seconds longer. The tall boy placed his hands on the smaller one's shoulder next, slowly moving them down to caress his arms. George pressed his lips shut, seemingly nervous by the actions, or maybe even a little anxious; if because they were unexpected, unfamiliar, or he wasn't used to it, Clay wasn't sure.

He hummed, moving a little closer, while still keeping his eyes fixed on the other's face.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" George whispered, shifting awkwardly on his spot. The blond hummed again.

"Like what?" But the boy didn't answer.

He simply kept the same stunned expression as the big hands reached his own, taking both of them. Clay played with his fingers, then intertwined them.

"Dream." A hidden question, maybe a warning.

"Yeah?" But again, no answer.

And if he said to stop, he would. But George wasn't pulling away, he wasn't moving in any way. He just stayed there, still and quiet, letting the American feel his skin. And if he seemed uncomfortable, he would stop. But George's breath was stuck in his throat, cheeks just so faintly pink and eyes still slightly widened, showing some hint of curiosity along the confusion.

The blond brought his hands back the brunet's cheeks as before, repeating his previous actions. Then, he moved closer again, faces only inches away. And George seemed nervous, still quite surprised, but he didn't seem to dislike it. How could he dislike it, being touched by his soulmate?

"Why are you so quiet?" Clay asked. *Why aren't you pushing me away?*

And once more, there was no answer. As if the boy was putting all his focus on processing what was going on, making him unable to respond. And that, that could be a good sign. Because George said platonic, but maybe that wasn't what they were.

It wasn't surprising, really, that he thought that way. He couldn't even blame him, if the thought never crossed his mind. If he never questioned the possibility of more. Because he himself avoided doing so until that day. So it was normal, it was understandable... But it could still change. They've been friends for so long, that's all the brunet expected and had gotten to know. So he would just have to show him. He would have to show him just how much more they could be.

Clay pressed his forehead against the boy's. George took a sharp breath.

"*Dream* ." Definitely a warning now.

"I'm so happy you're here," he repeated his words from earlier, pulling away just so slightly. George looked like a deer caught in headlights.

The blond smirked, caressing the corner of his mouth with his fingertip, then slowly leaned down. George closed his eyes, holding his breath. And Clay pressed his lips on his forehead, before pulling away completely.

"Goodnight, Georgie."

He turned around without giving him time to respond, ignoring the fast beating of his heart, or the happiness the brunet's reaction brought to his chest. He walked to his room, not glancing back at the boy behind him. He focused on his thoughts, making his mind on what he wanted to do.

Because he could do platonic. Or he could prove he wasn't the one that got it wrong. Because in darkness, soulmates would be the light. And when lost, they would be a guide.

He could light up George's world, to make him see.

He would show him the truth, and make him fall for him.

Chapter End Notes

new fic? lets gooo

to everyone thats read some of my work before, im letting you know now that i wont be updating this fic as often as i used with my other ones, cause my classes are starting and i wont have as much time to write (but i'll still work on it whenever i have free

time) :]

also i know most of you voted on twitter that you preferred fics with more chapters,
but just for this one i think less is more haha next one will probably have more as you
said

to everyone thats new here, welcome!! i hope you have a fun time :D

kudos and comments are super appreciated <3

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[twitter](#)

Tasting

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The smell of freshly cooked food filled the kitchen. Natural orange juice, blueberry pancakes. Toasts, bacon, and eggs.

Clay placed the plate and glass in front of the brunet, yawning as he took the seat at the other front of the table. He didn't expect to be making breakfast at six in the morning, but George had decided to make his jet lag the blond's problem too. And by that he meant, he had barely been able to sleep that night and so he happened to awake to hear the boy leave his room, and of course he couldn't *not* check on him and see if he needed something. A simple 'I'm hungry' turned into Clay spending half an hour putting his culinary abilities to use.

... Okay, maybe George hadn't made his jet lag the blond's problem. Maybe Clay was just a simp. But how could he not get out of his way to please his best friend, soulmate, *and* guy he just realized he had a crush on?

Speaking of which...

"Thanks," his friend mumbled, taking a bite of his toast and eating quietly. The blond stared at him, keeping his eyes on the boy until he looked at him as well. "What?"

"So, are we gonna ignore the fact that you wanted me to kiss you last night?"

The British's cheeks tinted pink, eyes widening for a second before he huffed, leaning back in faked disinterest as if the comment didn't make him embarrassed.

"I didn't." He shook his head. "You're an idiot."

"You so did, you even closed your eyes and everything," he mocked, a grin on his face.

"That's not true," the boy instantly defended. "That's not even true, that's not what happened."

"What happened, then?" George stayed quiet for a couple seconds, before rolling his eyes and looking to the side.

"I *thought* you were gonna kiss me," he mumbled. "And I didn't wanna see it happen." Clay couldn't help but snort, glancing at him, skeptical.

"You didn't wanna *see it happen*?" He repeated, raising an eyebrow. "*That's* why you closed your eyes?"

"... Yeah." The blond let out a laugh, leaning over the table to cut some distance.

"If you thought I was going to kiss you, why didn't you pull away then? Or push me away," he questioned, grin growing bigger as the boy blushed lightly again. "I mean, if you didn't *want* me to."

"Cause you were like, holding me or something."

"*Holding* you?" The American chuckled, amused by what clearly sounded like an excuse. "George, I was touching your face, how did that stop you from moving-"

“Whatever, you were the one being weird anyways,” the boy cut him off. “Like, why were you even- You were like, I don’t even know.”

“It was a forehead kiss, George, how is that weird?”

“That’s not what it seemed.” The brunet shifted awkwardly on his spot, averting his gaze. And with that small reaction, Clay suddenly felt bad, a bit concerned.

He wanted to open his friend’s eyes to what could possibly be between them, but he didn’t want to make him uncomfortable in the process, or cross some kind of line.

“I’m sorry,” he said, moving back to give him some space again. “If it bothers you, I won’t do it again. I won’t get too close.”

“It doesn’t,” the Brit said right away. “Bother me,” he clarified. And with that, the blond relaxed. He hadn’t messed things up. “But don’t act like- I’m not the one making things weird.”

“To be fair, you *did* think I was gonna kiss you for no reason.”

“You’ve talked about us kissing when we meet like, a bunch of times, Dream.” The brunet huffed, rolling his eyes again. “And with the whole soulmate thing-”

“You think ‘bout that a lot?” The American interrupted, the grin back on his face and raising an eyebrow. George furrowed his brows, obviously confused. “Us kissing.” Once again, the boy’s cheeks turned a bright shade of pink. “Do my comments keep you up at night, *imagining it*?”

“You’re- that’s not-” Watching the brunet get flustered in real life was a hundred times better than over camera, and the blond was living for it. “You’re such an idiot, why are you-”

“What are you guys talking about?”

Both boys turned to look at their friend, watching him sit down by George’s side, yawning. The blond checked his phone before looking at the youngest boy.

“Why are you awake at six in the morning?” He questioned, Sapnap shrugging in response.

“I smelled food.” Clay couldn’t help but snort.

“You smelled food *in your sleep*?” George asked, unconvinced.

“Yeah” the short boy said, like it was the most normal thing in the world. “Got me hungry.”

“Makes sense.”

“No it doesn’t?”

The blond smiled as he watched his roommate try to defend himself and the brunet argue with him, a banter soon taking place while Sapnap sneakily stole some of the British’s food. But his focus didn’t stay in the conversation for too long, his eyes soon fixed on his best friend.

George, with his fake annoyance and loudness. George, with his laugh and silly comments. George, glancing at him discreetly before he kept talking. And maybe he was reading too much into it, but something told him that his reaction from the previous night and explanations full of excuses could be a good sign. Maybe there was more to the story that he was able to look at, and maybe he was right to believe he could win the boy’s heart. But for now, he would let it be. For now, he wouldn’t insist.

Because the last thing he wanted was to force things to happen, or come off as too pushy and cause the opposite effect of what he wanted. Because he wanted George to see him as more than friends, without losing their friendship in the process.

He needed to take things slow, wait for his chance before bringing the whole thing up again.

Dropping the topic was easier than he thought. Although his brain made it hard to stop thinking about something once it caught his attention, this time, for better or for worse, he had other things he needed to focus on.

Like his face reveal.

The vlog they had been recording all week for it, and the stream they would do after. Now that George was there, he had to keep his promise on the matter.

The plan was simple enough at first for him to agree to it. Vlogging had always been something his friends wanted to do, and it seemed appropriate to face reveal on YouTube after talking about wanting the platform to be involved. And since he would edit the video himself, he could choose how much footage with his face he would put on. But as the week went on, and they filmed more of their first adventures together and their new daily routine in the Dream Team house, the more anxious he became about it. The moment it marked a week of them being together, everything suddenly felt a little too real.

They were going to wait longer at first. They would record the first week, and take one or two extra ones to edit and feel ready to post it. But at some point, the idea of waiting didn't sit right with him anymore, because it meant he had more time to back down and change his mind. So they announced a date, and there was no coming back anymore. And maybe he could have still been okay-ish with that, but then a stream was added to the plan. He would only be in frame for a little while, and wouldn't do more face-cam streams after that, but doing it that one time would keep fans happy and get them a significant amount of subs.

To be honest, he didn't want to do it. But he still agreed, just this once.

He regretted his decision now.

Clay paced the room as he took deep breaths, trying to keep his anxiety in check. One more hour, and the vlog would be released. One more hour before his face would be out there. One more hour, before his life drastically changed.

He was excited that he would be able to go out, meet the rest of his friends, and do more things that stay locked in his house. But besides that, he was terrified.

People, hate, and fame could only reach him so much when he was faceless. There was still some sense of safety, some things he could keep private to protect himself and his family. But now, he would be out there, exposed and public for everyone to see.

He wanted to call the whole thing off. He wanted to have more time. But it was too late for that.

A knock on his door took him out of his thoughts. He let out a quiet 'come in' and watched the door open, George entering his room slowly.

"Hey," the blond mumbled.

“Hi,” the boy said in response.

The American doubted for a second before going to sit on his bed, patting the space by his side. The British closed the door before sitting by his side, knees barely touching.

“You’re freaking out.” Not a question, but a statement. Clay let out a breathy chuckle.

“Yeah.”

Silence fell over them, but it wasn’t uncomfortable. So used to staying in calls without saying a word, simply wanting the other’s company, this felt somewhat familiar. But better. Because this time, they were actually together. George’s mere presence was enough to make him feel a little calmer, allowing him to breathe properly and attempt to calm his heart. It didn’t fully stop his panic, or made him less scared, but it was comforting to have him there.

“Give me your hand.” His friend’s voice took him by surprise, for some reason not expecting him to talk.

“What?”

“Give me your hand,” he repeated. And Clay complied, despite not knowing what that was about. George gently took his hand with his own, carefully intertwining their fingers. The blond looked at the union, blinking a few times before glancing at the brunet again, a million questions written on his face. “They say... Touching your soulmate can be helpful or something” the boy offered as an explanation.

And Clay’s heart melted.

George wasn’t a touchy person, and George wasn’t the best at knowing how to comfort people. Yet there he was, trying his best to be there for him and make him feel better. And maybe that was expected from a best friend, and maybe it wasn’t the first time that the boy had tried to cheer him up. But experiencing it in person, and choosing that gesture to do so, it was different.

The brunet rubbed his skin with his thumb in a soothing gesture, keeping a puzzled look as if he himself wasn’t sure of what he was doing or if it was right. But he was, indeed, right. Soulmates being able to make their special person feel more at ease by simply touching them was something he grew up listening to. Another one of the wonders of being connected to someone to such a personal level.

“It is,” the blond whispered, his heart beating fast now for a whole other reason. Because George’s pale and cold hands felt so warm holding his own.

He took a deep breath, closing his eyes for a second to focus on the feeling of skin against skin, before opening them again.

“I’m not gonna regret this, am I?” He asked, needing the reassurance that everything would be alright.

“You might,” the brunet said, instead of whatever the blond was hoping for. Clay’s face fell, George looked at him. “But you know how to make things you regret work.” And that was better than anything he could’ve expected.

His shoulders relaxed, his chest feeling less tight, letting the reminder sink in his brain. He had faced almost every single bad thing imaginable during his career and had found a way to not only move on but, in most cases, make the best out of it too. And no matter what came from his face

reveal, this wouldn't be different.

Taking one last deep breath, he let go of his soulmate's hand, wrapping his arms around him instead to pull him into a hug.

"Thank you," he whispered, burying his face on his neck. They stayed like that for a couple more seconds before pulling away. Clay smiled at the boy, George smiling back. Then the blond moved closer again, pressing his forehead against the boy's and closing his eyes.

It felt nice, being close like that. It felt nice, to keep their bodies touching somehow. It felt nice, and good, and made his heart warm. He could stay like that for a lifetime, so close to what he wanted the most but barely out of reach. He could live with that.

His eyes opened again. And George's face was enough to take his breath away.

Blushed cheeks, licking his lips, and shiny eyes fixed on the blond's own mouth.

The brunet looked up, their eyes meeting. Clay's hand moved on instinct, cupping his friend's cheek.

George instantly pulled away, averting his gaze, and shifting awkwardly on his spot before standing up.

"We should go downstairs," he let out, tone as flat as could be. "Sapnap was trying to cook."

"That can't be good." The American stood up as well, watching the boy quickly head to the door and opening it for them. He followed him, without saying a word, but his mind was talking loudly. Because one is a coincidence, two is a pattern. So how could he not think there was a chance George had feelings he simply didn't acknowledge?

And his face reveal was still around the corner, and he would still have to stream that same night and face his fears. But now he had something to think of to distract himself.

The light of the TV was the only thing keeping the room from complete darkness. The sound of the TV resonated through the room, dialogues of another badly-written movie they weren't sure why they picked. Their first movie night since before they met.

His face reveal had gone better than he expected, the video breaking records faster than they could've imagined. And the stream was short and easy enough as well, not having to be on camera for more than a few minutes; the rest of the time leaving his head out of frame. But after all that, he was exhausted. Mentally and emotionally, it was more than a little draining, and so his body reacted accordingly.

Somehow, he managed to sleep over ten hours, ate some light lunch the once he woke up the next day, before going back to bed until nighttime. He's probably never slept so much in his life, but at least he didn't have to deal with social media for the critical hours after the big reveal, which he was thankful for.

Choosing to watch a movie to spend time with their friends once he felt awake enough was the best plan he was able to think of, not wanting to do anything too demanding but still craving their company. Sapnap had watched one full movie with them before heading to his room, having promised Punz he would play Valorant with him. And then, it was just George and him.

It was kind of ironic, the two of them watching another movie about soulmates, of all things. But at the same time, it felt just right, to make snarky comments about how bad the film was like good old times.

... However.

It was bound to happen. Watching another story about how soulmates inevitably fall in love in the end. He couldn't help thinking about it, think about all of it. The spark when they touched, the shared moments that seemed to hide something between the lines they said. The beliefs they had, and what they were and weren't supposed to be. And he could go over and over it in his head. But he would never be able to fully understand on his own.

"Why are you so sure we're platonic soulmates?" Clay asked, a bit too sudden and making the boy yelp.

The brunet looked at him, raising an eyebrow with a questioning look before staring at the TV again.

"Because we're friends, Dream."

"Doesn't mean we couldn't be more." The boy sighed, turning to look at him again. He had an expression the blond couldn't read.

"You're being weird."

"How am I being weird?"

"You're just..." George pursed his lips, then shook his head. "It sounds like you want us to be more or something."

"Maybe I do," he mumbled, shrugging in fake neutrality.

"Stop being an idiot," the boy huffed, crossing his arms. "You don't mean that." And Clay was ready to ask *what do you mean*, or say he maybe he *did* mean it, but he didn't get the chance to. "You've never wanted that before, why would you now?"

The blond opened his mouth to talk, but closed it after a second. He could push his luck, and hint at the feelings he's discovered. He could talk about realizing things, in an hypothetical way. But he didn't want to make things awkward if for some reason it turned out he was the one in the wrong after all.

"I just wanna know how you're so sure," he decided to say instead. "I mean, I'm not saying we *aren't* platonic soulmates, but-"

"I just don't see why anything would change just because we're soulmates," his friend interrupted, sighing again. "The whole soulmates thing is dumb. Liking someone because you're supposed to it's stupid. If you didn't like me before, then why-"

"You're not *supposed* to," Clay cut him off this time. "It's just... Easier, to catch feelings for someone that you're so close to, and truly gets you. Like, think about it."

George shifted to look at him better, raising an eyebrow with an expression that seemed to say *go on*. Like he was willing to listen, to whatever explanation he had to say. And so, it felt like the right moment to push just a little more. He shifted as well, moving a little closer. He let his hand graze the boy's, fingers barely touching.

"If you had to choose..." He whispered. "Who's better to fall in love with than your best friend?"

The brunet visibly swallowed, shifting awkwardly and moving his hand away to play with his own fingers instead. A self-soothing gesture Clay knew all too well. So the blond moved back, giving him some space before shrugging.

"I don't know, George, I'm just saying," he mumbled. "Like, we didn't know each other in person before." The boy raised an eyebrow, looking confused.

"So?"

"So things change all the time," he concluded. "And when things change, we learn things about ourselves."

He focused on the TV again, leaning back on the couch and trying to relax, hoping he didn't go too far but just enough to plant the idea on the brunet's head, so he could think about it.

They stayed in silence, watching the crappy film for a while longer. He half paid attention, half let his mind overthink what he just did, trying to read into his friend's reactions and words and behaviors. That, until something on the screen caught his attention again, his eyes examining the scene and the way the protagonist pressed their lips together. And just like that, without thinking twice, he blurted out.

"I think we should kiss."

George choked with his own spit, turning his head instantly to look at him.

"*What?*"

"I think we should kiss," he repeated, a little less sure of himself now. Okay, maybe, just maybe, he should've thought a bit more before he spoke.

"What are you- you're being an idiot again, I'm leaving." The boy stood up, and Clay's eyes widened, reaching for his hand to stop him.

"No, wait, hear me out. Just hear me out." The brunet glanced at him, seemingly uncertain, before sitting down again. The blond took a second to organize his thoughts, trying to figure out where he wanted to go with that. "I meant like, as a test."

George raised an eyebrow.

"A test?"

"Yeah, a soulmates test." He nodded. "Like... If we don't feel anything, then we're definitely platonic, like, for sure."

The Brit seemed unconvinced. And to be honest, the American wasn't fully convinced of his own words either, already starting to question what pushed him to say that. But sometimes he could be impulsive, going from overthinking to not thinking at all. And what was done was done, he wasn't going to back down now.

"One kiss," he said, raising one finger.

"That's stupid." The boy huffed, almost seeming annoyed. He looked at the screen again, and Clay thought that was it. But not two seconds later, his friend glanced at him again. "Just one kiss?"

“Just one kiss,” he repeated, nodding a few times. Because maybe George was curious too, after all. Maybe he needed some clarification on his own thoughts, needing to verify what he thought was right, like he himself did.

“And you’re not telling anyone?” Clay snorted, amused by the question.

“I wouldn’t.”

“You would, but okay.” The brunet rolled his eyes, focusing on the tv again. But as before, he glanced at him not a moment later. “One kiss.” The blond nodded again.

George nodded too, before turning to face him. He placed his hands on the tanner skin and moved closer. And without another word, a warning or a cue, the brunet closed the gap between them, lips colliding together in a short and quick peck.

As soon as it started, it was over.

Clay blinked a few times, taken back by both the sudden action and how little it lasted. He didn’t even get time to process what was happening before the boy had pulled away. Yet his friend was still looking at him with a ‘*see?*’ written in his eyes, as if he had just proved everything when, in reality, he accomplished nothing.

The blond groaned, rolling his eyes.

“That was *not* a kiss,” he complained. Because, seriously? He hardly even felt it. His soulmate frowned, lips pursed in confusion as if he was talking nonsense. “Come on, George, that doesn’t count. Are you kidding?”

“How is it not?” The boy huffed. “Our lips touched, that’s a kiss.”

“That’s not how it works, *what?*” Clay looked at him in complete disbelief. Was he for real? Obviously that didn’t count. It was barely even a peck and even as one it was too fast. He couldn’t possibly think *that* was enough to determine anything.

“What do you mean that’s not how it works?” His friend argued, his tone slightly more defensive. “It literally- you’re so annoying. It was a kiss.”

The blond was about to argue back, but even he could recognize a dead end when he saw one. Clearly, George thought whatever that was could count as what they agreed on. So to show him wrong, and get him to *actually* go through their plan, he needed a different approach.

“Okay, you’re a bad kisser then, good to know.” The brunet let out an offended scoff.

“I’m not-”

“You are,” he interrupted. “If you think that counted, then you like, don’t know how to do it I guess.”

“That’s not true,” the boy mumbled, voice still defensive. “Our lips touched, that’s all it matters.”

“*That’s all it ...?*” He stopped himself, shaking his head. “George, no. That’s not it.”

There were so many things wrong with that statement. And he wasn’t sure if the Brit was saying that just to try to convince him, or if he actually thought so. But in any case, it only made his interest in the matter grow bigger.

The blond shifted, moving closer to his friend and placing a hand on his cheek, caressing it with his thumb. His finger traveled down to his chin, lifting his head to make him look directly at his eyes. Then, he leaned into him, foreheads touching for a third time. The brunet's eyes widened, but he didn't move away.

"If you think that's a kiss, I'm gonna have to teach you how to do it right."

And he closed the gap between them again.

George's lips were soft and tasted like the lemonade he drank earlier, the faint contact being enough to send shivers down his spine. He was still at first, almost unresponsive, allowing and accepting the touch but not giving it back. Yet after a second, he relaxed into the gesture. So Clay began to move his mouth.

He kissed him gently and slowly, savoring every movement of their lips pressed together. He caressed his cheek with his thumb, giving him time to relax and get lost in the moment.

The brunet's mouth finally synced with his own, dancing together slowly like it was meant to be done. And once that happened, the blond pressed their lips harder, with more intention and passion, the boy placing his hands on the American's shoulder as if the sudden chance made him need the hold. Clay nipped at his bottom lip, running his tongue over it, getting a quiet gasp in response. And he used that opening to slide his tongue, deepening the kiss and exploring his mouth.

George squeezed his shoulders, holding into him tightly before suddenly pulling him closer, tongue fighting for dominance to try and take over the kiss. The blond smirked into the gesture, placing his hands on the boy's waist and pulling him to sit on his lap.

Lips grew demanding, hands tangling on his hair. His own hands squeezed the tiny waist, caressing his sides as he gave him the control he wanted to lead the kiss. And the dance continued, until their lungs screamed for air.

Clay was the one to break the kiss, trying to catch his breath as he looked at his friend. George was panting softly, eyes glossy, lips wet with saliva, and cheeks heavily blushed. God, the image made his whole body warmer. But before he could fully calm his breathing, the brunet leaned back in, ready to connect their lips again.

However, the blond pulled away, keeping the distance between them. Without saying a word, and with a cocky grin appearing to the thought, he moved his hand up, raising only his index finger in a gesture that read *just one*.

One kiss.

It's not like he wanted to stop kissing George. No. He wanted to kiss him stupid and get him begging for more. But he needed him to see what he was doing, to open his eyes. He needed him to realize the blond wasn't the only one enjoying the moment.

The brunet seemed taken back, blinking a few times before his eyes widened slightly. He quickly moved away to sit by his side as before, with a face that looked like he had just seen a ghost. And because Clay could sin of being too full of himself at times, especially to tease his friends, he didn't find anything better to do than whispering.

"*That is a kiss.*"

The brunet stayed silent, simply staring at him. His face was completely unreadable, looking lost in his own thoughts. He kind of seemed out of it, but at the same time, it felt like he was thinking

really hard. And maybe that was a good thing, or maybe not. So the American cleared his throat, deciding to put the focus back on the whole *test* thing and see if that helped anything after all.

“So, platonic?”

George pursed his lips, shifting in his spot, staring at him for just a few more seconds before looking away to the forgotten film. Clay blinked, feeling a little lost. His friend seemed to be enjoying himself just two seconds ago, but now, somehow he looked like he had just been punched on the face.

There wasn't guilt on his face, nor embarrassment, not signs of him being upset. Nothing that could tell him what was happening in his head or why the sudden change. But he didn't get time to ask, the boy nodding then speaking in a quiet tone.

“... Yeah.” He barely let out, then quickly stood up. He grabbed the tv remote to turn the screen off, before giving him a glance. “Friends.” And before Clay could respond, he turned around and walked away.

The blond blinked once, then twice.

And he had no idea what to think of that.

Chapter End Notes

i wanna hit someones head against a wall but im not saying whos

thank you all for the kudos and comments <3

[twitter: @WinterLighting](#)

Touching

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Things were normal. Despite the awkwardness after the kiss, things continued as usual.

No. They continued as if nothing ever happened.

That night, Clay couldn't sleep. His mind went over and over everything that happened, trying to understand where he went wrong, without much success. And as morning came, he passed out, too tired to keep himself awake any longer. So he didn't see the boy again until almost a full day had passed from their previous encounter.

George had greeted him as normally, telling him Sappap and him were going to order some McDonald's in the most casual way possible. And that was that. He had thought maybe they would need to talk, and even feared the boy could be upset at him. But nothing happened, nothing changed.

Things were okay. And they were still friends.

A part of him was relieved, but at the same time, it made him a little stressed. Because how much and what else could he realistically do now without coming off as pushy and persistent? Their routines stayed the same. Everything went as usual that day. And the day after. And the next one. Eventually, streaming was added to the equation, but even that didn't change. Their flirty nature and playful banter didn't change either.

Maybe he got it all wrong. Maybe he imagined the brunet being as into the kiss as he was. Maybe George truly saw him as his platonic partner after all. And maybe he was spending so much time trying to figure things out and understand his and the boy's feelings that he hadn't even taken the time to fully enjoy having his best friend with him. He decided he was done thinking so intensely about the soulmates mess. Sooner or later, he would find a way to make things clearer, but for now, he would focus on his two roommates and spending time with them.

Clay entered the kitchen with a yawn, his stomach demanding a midnight snack and something to drink, to help him stay awake for a couple more hours so he could finish editing his next video. The faint light by the fridge instantly let him know he wasn't alone, soon confirming this when he saw the brunet casually leaning on the refrigerator as he finished his food. George looked up, their eyes meeting. The blond walked until he was almost in front of him, quiet 'hi's exchanged as they stared at each other.

"Pop tart?" He asked, watching the boy take another bite. The Brit nodded, licking his fingers clean without a care in the world. For some reason, his stomach twisted to the sight.

"I think this is the last one," his friend mumbled.

"T's fine. Just gonna grab some water."

George hummed, placing his food on the counter before moving away from the fridge; so he wouldn't block the door anymore; then turned around to open it. The boy bent over to grab a bottle, and the green eyes couldn't help but glance at his friend's body and the ways his curves were on display.

Oh. He's never seen him without pants before.

It was fair to say, sweatpants didn't do him justice. His ass looked even bigger and he could only imagine how it would feel to squeeze it and-

The brunet turned around, Clay averted his eyes right away.

"Here." George offered him the bottle of water, the American took his with a quiet thanks. He actually didn't expect the boy to get it for him, so that was kind of nice.

The brunet hummed, taking his pop-tart again before leaning into the corner, his back pressed against the furniture as he looked at his friend and took another bite of his food. The blond opened his bottle, silently taking a sip as he watched the boy eat.

He watched the ways his lips carefully wrap the pastry before biting into it, his tongue licking them after to savor any chocolate remains left. He watched him bring his fingers to his mouth again, licking them clean as before, taking his time with each of his fingertips like minutes had no value at all.

The boy finished the sweet, Clay put his bottle away. The eye contact was unnecessary, and it would've been awkward with anyone else. But for some reason, none of them seemed to want to look away from each other. The blond noticed the bowl with fruits right behind his friend and took a step closer.

"I want an apple too."

The brunet hummed in response yet didn't move from his spot. So the American moved closer again, until he was right in front of him, one hand placed on the counter and the other arm reaching for the fruit; caging the smaller boy in the process. The Brit looked up, the height difference clearer from that position. He stayed on his spot, not phased by the proximity of the bigger body.

Clay got his apple, then let that arm rest by his side. But he stayed just as close, looking down to his friend. George didn't move either, glancing at him as well, eyes darting to his lips for just a second before staring at his eyes again.

"Anything else?" He whispered. Warmth pooled on the blond's chest.

Yes.

Yes, I want something else.

He shook his head to the boy's questioning look. Something about the tone messed with his head. Something felt like a challenge, too much of an open question to answer with honesty.

I want you. I want all of you.

"I'm good," he said instead, examining his friend's face to read his reaction. His eyes ended up fixed on his lips instead, on the chocolate stain by the corner of it. "You have something on your face."

"Where?" The British asked, but didn't make any attempts to find the stain himself, or even moving his hands closer to his face. Clay moved him instead.

"Right..." He placed his finger by the corner of the boy's mouth, gently wiping the chocolate with it and barely gracing his bottom lip. "Here." George's chest visibly moved when he breathed, the

blond felt his heart rate increase.

“Thanks.”

“No problem.”

And then they were silent. Still not moving, still staring. Simply hanging out by the fridge without saying a word at almost one in the morning. Clay’s eyes wandered to the boy’s lips again. He could’ve sworn he saw the brown orbs do the same with his own.

“Wanna watch a movie?” The brunet broke the silence. The memories of the shared moment in their previous movie night instantly filled his brain.

And he knew it wouldn’t happen again, he knew there wasn’t a hidden innuendo or invitation on that question. But he wanted it to be. He wanted that question being asked in that precise moment to be more than what it was. He wanted so badly to believe it meant something. So maybe he could say yes, just to test his luck. Just in case George changed his mind, and that the ‘sooner or later’ he was thinking about earlier would actually be right that instant. But he wasn’t supposed to think like that. And he was supposed to be doing something else.

“I’m... I’m editing,” he let out, internally cursing himself despite knowing it was for the best.

“Ah,” the brunet said in response. And it felt weird, it almost made him frown. Because why wasn’t he insisting? Why wasn’t he trying to make him change his mind and spend time with him instead as he would usually do on discord calls before they met?

The boy shifted on his spot, slowly sliding to the side so the blond’s body wouldn’t cage him no more.

“You could join me,” Clay quickly said, almost as if trying to stop him. George wasn’t insisting on being together, but the blond still wanted his company. “Wanna come to my room with me?”

“Yeah.” The breathy word came out instantly, making the American smile. But then, the Brit moved again, freeing himself fully and walking away. “Imma go to sleep.” The blond blinked, confusion invading him.

“What?” He asked. “But you said-”

“I’m tired.” And he didn’t want to believe it, but those words felt like they meant more than what they were. The boy offered him a faint smile, before turning around. “Goodnight, Dream.”

Clay stood there, silent for a few seconds before sighing. The tension was still palpable in the air; or at least, it was to him. And he didn’t know what to think of it.

Did George notice his moment of weakness? His desire to test their limits again? Had he made him uncomfortable?

Whatever it was, the boy was gone, and he was alone with his thoughts once again.

Things didn’t feel as normal anymore.

The laughter of his friends filled the room, two clear by his side and two coming from the computer’s speakers, besides his own loud one. He couldn’t believe they were playing that game.

He didn't remember whose idea it was, to let fans suggest games and then make them vote for the one they wanted them to play. That wasn't something they usually did, but they wanted to try something different and take a different approach for once, just to test it out. Turned out, it was a disaster. In a good or bad way he wasn't sure yet.

Apparently, everyone wanted them to play this weird *pajama party experience* game; whatever it was called; that felt quite similar to Jackbox in design, having multiple categories they could choose from to play, but notoriously made for pre-teen girls. So, they decided to test it out without streaming first, to have an idea of what they were getting into so no surprises would happen live.

The trivia was enough to make them lose their shit and that was just the first game, and from then on every single mini game felt like a fever dream. And the funniest -or cringiest- part was that after each round, whoever had the least number of points had to either do a dare or answer a question.

What the fuck were they even playing, honestly.

Karl's and Quackity's loud laughter increased when George's name appeared on the screen, the brunet huffing in annoyance for losing once again.

"This game is shit."

"You're shit at the game, Gogy, there's a difference." The boy rolled his eyes before pressing the spin button to get his punishment. Since they weren't streaming, both him and Sapnap were playing from their phones, all in the blond's room.

"Uhh, it's truth again!" Karl giggled.

"Who was your first *real* love?" Clay read out loud for him, and the 'aww's and kissing noises that both Karl and Quackity made got him laughing as well.

He saw his friend glance at him for a couple of seconds before huffing, shaking his head.

"No one," he stated. Both boys in discord and the blond himself scoffed.

"Oh, come on!"

"Don't act all thought big boy, answer the question."

"I just did," the brunet mumbled, but they weren't buying it.

"It's just us, George, we're not streaming."

"Yeah man, you can admit it's Dream, we won't tell," Karl added.

The way his friend would roll his eyes and scoff, pretending the blush on his cheeks wasn't there, it was almost amusing. Clay wheezed to the reaction, the boy shifting awkwardly on his spot.

"No but for real, I'm actually curious now. If you don't wanna say it's gotta be good" Quackity said. George glanced quickly at him again, probably wanting some moral support that the American wasn't offering, then he looked at Nick, who was already looking at the brunet. The boy sighed.

"I just- My relationships or whatever were never that serious, I guess." He played with his own fingers, his all too known self-soothing gesture. It took the blond a moment to understand what that sentence was, the giggles dying down as the other two also came to the same conclusion. He

blinked, both confused and surprised.

“Oh.” Karl broke the silence. “So... You haven’t been in love yet?”

Clay’s eyes were fixed on the smaller boy. Yet this time, the brown orbs never meet his gaze.

“No.” He said, after a second or two, playing with his fingers some more. “I haven’t.”

“Makes sense,” Sapnap simply said, before clicking on the next game. “Oh neat, makeup simulator let’s go!” And just like that, the topic was over. At least in the conversation. In his mind, though, the words kept replaying.

He knew sometimes he read too much into things and went over thoughts one too many times. But this actually felt like something he needed to look into. Because this could be the key. This could change things.

And he had said he was done thinking so intensely about the soulmates mess, but how could he not think about it with this new information?

He barely paid attention to the rest of the game, still participating but half of his mind somewhere else. After around an hour and a half, they decided they were done for the day. But for Clay, it was just starting. He wasn’t sure of how to bring it up, but he needed George to hear him out just one more time. And then, he could stick to his plan of letting the topic go until things resolved themselves on their own.

The boys said their goodbyes, and as soon as the call was over, his roommates stood up.

“I think I’m gonna stream, actually,” Sapnap announced, messing George’s hair with his hand before walking to the door. “See ya.”

The brunet was about to follow him, but Clay gently grabbed his hand before he could, making him turn around to face him.

“Wait,” he mumbled. “Can I ask you something?”

The boy’s safe shifting, seemingly worried for a second before a poker face took over, nodding slowly. The blond closed the door behind them, and without even bothering to sit down or get more comfortable, he went straight to the point.

“You said you’ve never been in love” he blurted out. George looked at him for a couple of seconds before looking away, shifting awkwardly on his spot.

“Yeah. I said that.”

“How do you know?” His friend glance was back on him, tilting his head to his question.

“What do you mean?”

And now, what has been on his mind since he first heard him.

“Like... What if you just, didn’t know you were?” Clay asked. The confusion on the boy’s face grew, and some sense of nervousness appeared on the American’s lower abdomen. “If, um, if you’ve never been in love, then maybe you don’t know how to tell when you are?”

The brunet blinked, then furrowed his brows.

Okay, that wasn't working. He clearly wasn't wording things right. He took a second to think, to try to organize his ideas in a way that his friend could understand.

"Maybe you could be in love with someone, or falling for them, but you don't know it because you haven't felt like that before," he decided to say. "Since you can't compare the feeling to anything you've experienced, you just, don't know what it is, and so you think it's something else."

George's face twisted, scrunching his nose in the same way he did every time he found something nonsensical.

"That makes no sense." There it was.

"But it does," he insisted, moving a little closer. "I mean, it's possible, if you don't know a feeling--"

"I know what love is, Dream," the boy cut him off, looking directly at him. "I know how to tell when I love someone."

Clay stopped for a second, to read the room and make sure his friend wasn't getting uncomfortable or upset. But instead of any of that, there was something else in the brown eyes. Almost like a challenge, a similar look to the one a few nights ago. And he wasn't sure what it meant, but he knew his friend well enough to at least know he wasn't crossing any lines.

"Okay." The blond nodded. And now, he pressed again. "But it's not exactly the same, is it?" He moved closer again, raising an eyebrow. The Brit took a deep breath, keeping his poker face.

"What do you mean?"

Clay took another step forward, George's back pressed against the wall. When had they moved there?

The boy held his glance, staring directly into his eyes. He stayed still, waiting for his next move. The air in the room suddenly felt heavier. Another step. The brunet didn't move.

"Do you know what being *in* love feels like, George?" Clay whispered. George didn't reply, simply averting his eyes before shaking his head once. "I can teach you."

Their glances met again. He looked for signs, for anything that said he was taking it too far. But again, there was none.

In all honesty, he wasn't sure of what his next move would be. He didn't plan this far ahead, never thinking they would get to this point. From all possible scenarios that crossed his mind when thinking of having the conversation, this wasn't one of them. But it was a chance he wouldn't lose. He wanted to take it, if George let him.

"Okay." The brunet's voice was barely louder than a whisper. "Explain, then."

Clay had wanted to be a writer. In the past, typing down his own story was something he was proud of. And although he had chosen a different path, he knew he could have his way with words, if he wanted. But he also knew George wasn't one for pretty sentences and overly complicated metaphors, actions speaking louder than any phrases he could come up with. So if he wanted to make this right, he would need to use both.

"Love." The blond brought his hand to his friend's cheek. He still wasn't sure of what to say, but he would give it his best shot. "Love starts as something simple... A nice warm feeling, too similar

to friendship and happiness.” He cupped said cheek, caressing it softly. “But it grows, and all the things that used to be normal, feel different now.”

George stayed quiet, curious eyes inciting him to keep going. Clay took a discrete deep breath, clearing his mind and letting his instincts take over. Because if this was his only chance to get somewhere, he would make it worth it.

“Their presence, you can’t never get enough,” he said, in a low voice. “Their smile makes your sadness go away.” He offered the boy a smile, the brunet returning it right away. “Their laugh...” He chuckled, his friend let out a quiet one of his own, always mimicking each other unconsciously. “... Your new favorite sound in the world.” He continued to caress his cheek with his thumb, before moving his hand down to his jaw, lifting it softly to stare at each other better. “When you look at them... You just can’t tear your eyes apart. God, why is it breathtaking? How are they *so* pretty?”

George’s cheek turned a cute shade of pink, a sense of embarrassment tinting his features. The blond returned to touch his cheek, using just his thumb to feel his skin.

“Their touch soon becomes too faint and too short to be enough.” He cupped his cheek with his whole hand next, moving his palm up and down to caress it. The brunet leaned into the touch. “But whenever it lasts longer... It’s warm, and nice, and comfortable. But also, it can be *electrifying*.” He placed his free hand on the boy’s hips, suddenly squeezing it, getting a surprised gasp in response. “And send shivers down your spine.”

The pretty pink was replaced for faint red, blush clearer now both in his face and neck, eyes slightly widened. Clay smirked, removing the hand on his hip.

“And a fire is born” he stated. “A craving, and curiosity, that starts right...” He placed his hand over the boy’s chest, where his heart is. “... Here.” George’s heartbeat was quite fast, faster than he’d thought. “And you start wondering things, and wanting things.”

“Like... What?”

The American was almost taken back by the question, not having expected the boy to talk at all. But he grinned, that being confirmation enough that whatever was happening, the brunet still wanted him to keep going. He hummed, taking another step further, caging the boy against the wall some more.

“You want to have them close, all the time,” he mumbled, keeping his low tone. “You want to be the reason why they smile, and to make them laugh. You want their eyes to light up looking at you like yours do when you look at them.”

The hand on the brunet’s cheek suddenly moved down, holding his jaw for a second before tracing his neck with one finger. The boy shivered, closing his eyes for a second and taking a sharp breath to the unexpected action.

“You want their touch, in more and more ways,” Clay continued. “And you wonder how it might feel, a gentle caress of his hand.” He moved his finger up and down slowly, carefully, before placing both hands on his shoulder. “You wonder how it might be, to have them feeling you up.”

The blond slid his hands slowly down his arms, taking his time to feel his skin until reaching his fingers. He placed his hands on his hips next, rubbing his hipbone over his clothes with his thumbs before feeling his sides, caressing up and down. George shivered again, pupils growing darker and breathing slightly heavier. His tiny hands found their ways to the blond’s shoulders, squeezing

them softly before holding onto them. And he wasn't expecting the boy to touch as well, but he surely wasn't complaining.

Clay moved closer, and closer, until their foreheads touched. The brunet took a sharp breath.

"You wonder how it would be, to get their mouth against yours," he whispered, before closing the gap between them some more. "To taste them," he mumbled against his lips, barely grazing them as he spoke. The boy held onto him tighter, closing his eyes. But the blond pulled away, not pursuing the gesture that his body desperately needed. The sound of annoyance he got in response was worth it. "And if you get lucky enough to do it, you'll find out you like it." The cockiness was evident in his tone, the grin clear with no need of seeing it.

George opened his eyes again, pursing his lips as if to hide his frustration. And Clay was ready to leave it at that, to give him time to think and realize the blond had kind of just proven a point there. But the brunet spoke again.

"And then?"

Heat pooled on his stomach to the sound of his friend's voice. God fuck, why did it sound so raspy? Why did it sound so breathy? And why was that enough to make him feel warm inside?

The tone, it was too much. If he didn't know better, it would sound as if the boy was... *Enjoying himself*, a little more than expected. In *ways* he didn't expect.

He cleared his throat, focusing on the moment again. Because if the brunet wanted him to keep going, he wouldn't say no to that. He would take as much as he was allowed, and he would give as much as George would accept.

"And the fire in here..." He placed a hand back on his chest. "It'll grow warmer. Slowly waking feelings inside you, and even more cravings. Finding its way down..." He slid his hand down slowly, caressing his chest and stomach until he reached his lower abdomen. "Here."

Despite wearing clothes, he could still feel his friend's body warmth, making his own skin feel hotter. The Brit took a deep breath, then tried to hold eye contact again. And god, the air was too thick to breathe normally.

"A tickling sensation whenever you touch, an unspoken tension when you're alone. Always wanting more, *waiting* for more," he whispered. And if his words resembled how things had been feeling for him these past few days, it was a mere coincidence... Or not. The blond glanced down to the boy's mouth. "And you'll wonder how their lips would feel against your skin..."

He lowered his head, burying it on George's shoulder. He placed his lips over his neck, not pressing down but grazing at it with them in a teasing motion. The brunet gasped softly, squeezing his shoulders.

"And how sensitive their hands could make you feel..." He let his hands lift the boy's shirt ever so lightly, just to feel his skin with his fingertips. "Maybe they'd bite your neck, pull your hair." He let his teeth graze his skin, in a playful way. The British let out a choked-out sound. "Maybe play with *this* zone." His hands caressed his chest over his clothes, before pulling away slightly to look at him directly again. "Maybe they let *you* play with them."

The boy's pupils grew darkened, eyes widening. His chest visibly moved with how uneven he was breathing, hands gripping at his shirt in response.

"You'll think about it, let the thought consume you. You'll want to find out. You'll *need* to know."

The brunet let go of him, cheeks bright red as he shifted awkwardly on his spot, eyes glancing down for just a second before staring at him again. And Clay was trying really hard to not read into it, to not think of what he thought that reaction meant. But it was impossible, he couldn't ignore what was obvious at this point.

Because he wasn't stupid, and he wasn't blind. And George was most definitely turned on.

The blond took a deep breath, his jeans feeling tighter with the thought.

"And- And the fire will keep growing," he mumbled, trying to keep his secure tone despite the beating of his heart making it hard to focus. "It'll down everything in its path, and consume you, until you burst in flames." He felt like he was on fire, indeed, placing his hands on the waistline of his friend's sweatpants. "And, sometimes, the fire keeps traveling. It keeps going down, lower and lower, until it gets..."

Green eyes wandered down, fixing on the boy's crotch. The outline of his hard dick was clear as day on his sweats.

Clay's throat went dry.

"Yeah, there," he managed to let out, before looking up to his friend again.

George looked like a deer caught in headlights, slight panic and embarrassment over his face. He seemed to want to say something, maybe excuse himself, but words were stuck in his mouth. And that was reminder enough that he needed to keep his shit together, and keep being in control. One wrong movement and it would be movie night all over again.

He moved one of his legs, using his knee to push at the boy's and try to spread them apart. The brunet reacted instantly, separating his legs for him so he could place his own in between. And the blond placed his knee right by his dick.

"Right here," he mumbled, watching the Brit take a sharp breath. He still seemed nervous, despite his compliant gestures. "And if you let it..." A hidden question. A single nod as a response. "... Pressure starts to grow." He pressed down with his knee, getting a soft sound in response. "And it can be suffocating, and overwhelming. But it feels *good*."

The blond began to move his leg, his knee rubbing on the hardness slowly and in circular motions. George held tighter onto him, eyes shutting close and biting his lips to keep quiet.

"And when you close your eyes, you see them." He let his hands caress the boy's sides as he kept stimulating his member, getting another sound in response. "And when you feel lonely, you think of them. And you want so much you don't know what to do with yourself."

The brunet began to shift his hips slightly, the blond increased his movements to help him get more friction. He moved his face closer to his ear, then whispered.

"When you're needy, hands down your pants and panting, all in your mind it's *them*."

The whine that escaped his soulmate's lips went straight to his dick, feeling himself getting harder inside his jeans. And god, he wanted to do something about it. He wanted to turn George around, pull his pants down and fuck him against that very wall. But this wasn't about him, that wasn't the purpose this time.

He stilled his hands by the boy's hips, guiding his movements to help him grind down his leg, his knee still rubbing directly at his member.

“Until all your thoughts are gone, and all you can remember is their name.” His friend lowered his head, another sound escaping him as he buried his face on the taller man’s neck.

“Dream,” the brunet whispered. The blond took a sharp breath. George was shifting his hips faster, panting heavily and gripping at his clothes.

“And you’ll say their name, and then again.”

“Dream,” the boy repeated, voice raspier and just as breathy. He grinded harder, making the American smirk. The way he was using his leg to chase his own pleasure was almost *cute*.

“You’ll say it over and over again.”

“Dream.” God, he could hear him say that forever, in that same tone.

He let one of his hands travel down, then behind, reaching for the boy’s ass. He squeezed it lightly, cautiously, stroking his member with his knee a little faster. George whined loudly, gripping at his shirt as his movement became sloppy and erratically, as if he was losing focus. His panting was getting faster, soft moans coming out more and more often.

He squeezed his ass again, the boy’s whole body trembled.

“Dream,” he moaned. George *moaned* . Holding onto him as if his life depended on it. “*Dream.*”

“Yeah, just- just like that.”

It was the hottest thing he’s ever heard. It was the hottest thing he’s ever done. Watching the boy barely be able to keep up with his own movements, slowly coming to a full stop as he focused on breathing again, it only made him want him to make his soulmate completely fall apart. And if his friend was too out of it to keep moving and pleasing himself, he could easily fix that.

One of his hands moved from his hip down, reaching for the waistline of his pants to pull them down. But before he could, the brunet hands stopped his own. The boy quickly pulled them away, shifting slightly to the side so his body wouldn’t be so directly on display for the blond.

Clay blinked a few times, then panic invaded him.

Shit, had he gone too far? Was that too much?

He looked at the boy’s friend with fear in his eyes, ready to apologize, or ask what he needed, or accept whatever angry words he could tell him. But soon panic was replaced by confusion, noticing how the brunet kept his head down, ears as red as they could be. He seemed to be looking at something, but quickly glanced up at him again. And his expression again was like a scared animal being caught.

Clay blinked a few times, thinking of asking what was wrong. But then, a thought crossed his mind, and instead he looked down as well. His eyes widened instantly, eyes fixed on George’s face again. The boy instantly tried to pull his shirt down, unsuccessfully trying to cover the sticky spot in his sweatpants.

“I-” The brunet’s words died in his mind, face completely red as he shifted awkwardly.

The blond couldn’t believe his eyes.

“Did you really already...?” One finger poked at the wet area, feeling the sticky substance. George

instantly moved away, taking some distance from him.

He couldn't believe his eyes. But that was real. That was a hundred percent real. He let out a soft chuckle, completely in disbelief.

George came in his pants. *He* made George cum in his pants. And he might have accomplished a lot of things in his short life, but this was for sure the biggest one of them.

The brunet let out an annoyed and frustrated sigh, getting his attention again.

"Stop laughing," the boy whined, turning around to hide himself. Clay blinked a few times, then snapped out of it.

"I'm not, I'm-" His soulmate groaned again, starting to walk to the door. "Wait, George." The American hurried to take his hand, making him stop. "I'm not laughing at you," he assured.

The Brit glanced at him, just for a couple of seconds before looking away.

"Okay," he mumbled, pulling away to get free from his hand. "I need to change." And before he could stop him for a second time, the boy headed out the room.

Clay stared at the door, mind blank and feelings all over the place.

He made George cum.

Holy fuck.

Things definitely weren't normal.

He was stupid to believe they would be, in all honesty.

He should have known. He shouldn't have let the boy leave his room like that. He should've tried to go after him, or at least sent him a message to check on him. Instead, he simply waited for him to come back to the room all night. Like a *fool*.

Clay was stressed, and worried beyond belief. He hasn't seen George leave his room once all day, and now he couldn't help but feel like he completely and utterly messed up. He needed to apologize, or do something, do anything. Because despite the boy giving him the green light to continue that night, maybe it had been too much too fast after all, and he was regretting it or hating him for letting him go that far, or something.

The blond paced around the hallway, as he had been doing for the past thirty minutes. The day was almost over, and if he went to sleep another night not knowing how his friend was, his anxiety wouldn't let him rest at all. Thankfully for him, he didn't have to wait much longer. Just a couple of minutes and the boy was carefully opening his bedroom door.

"George!" The brunet yelped, eyes widened as he saw him standing right outside his room. And in a blink of an eye, his face was beet red. "George, about last night-"

The boy's loud groan stopped his words, watching the boy instantly look away.

"I don't wanna talk about it."

The blond's stomach twisted. Was it even worse than he thought? If they couldn't even talk about

what they did, then he truly ruined everything.

“But I- George, why-”

“I just- I haven’t been fucked in a while, okay?” The boy blurted out, slightly defensive. But as soon as those words left his mouth, the brown eyes widened, green ones mimicking the reaction. Because there was something implied in those words, something George never directly admitted to before. “I don’t- I haven’t done things with anyone in a while,” he tried to correct himself, despite obviously being too late for that. “So that’s why- It’s not like I always- That *never* happens.”

Clay furrowed his brows in confusion at first, not understanding what he was talking about. But then, it clicked, and suddenly everything made sense. His reactions, the reddish of his skin, wanting to avoid him and the topic. The boy was embarrassed.

Of course he was embarrassed.

The American had the worst possible reaction the night before, of course his friend would take it the wrong way.

“George, I wasn’t trying to make fun of you. I was just surprised,” he instantly assured, now that he could see what the issue was. The boy’s demeanor relaxed, yet still glanced at him cautiously. “I didn’t expect you to... You know. But it wasn’t a bad thing!” He offered him a smile, his soulmate simply shifted awkwardly, still looking uncertain. “I mean it, I swear. It wasn’t bad at all. Actually, kind of the opposite. It was- It was hot.”

The brunet stopped moving, staring at him with a surprised expression. Yet it only lasted a few seconds, before being replaced for a neutral one.

“Hot?” He questioned. The blond nodded.

“Yeah. Really hot.”

George sighed, shaking his head.

“Dream, stop playing with me.” Clay frowned hearing those words, not understanding what he was referring to or why he would think that. But before he could ask, his friend spoke again. “I want- I want out.” This time, the blond blinked, notoriously confused.

“What do you mean?”

“Whatever game this is, I’ll end up losing.” George sighed again. “So I want out.”

“It’s not a- I’m not playing anything?” To say the American felt lost, was to say the least.

“Then what are you doing?” His soulmate asked, tone calm yet somewhat accusatory. “Why are you doing all this?”

Clay opened his mouth to talk, but suddenly, he didn’t know what to say. If he confessed now, and the boy didn’t feel the same, everything would be over. Because maybe what they shared was a moment of lust, bodies reacting to each other for their special connection, and not because of feelings being reciprocated.

To his lack of response, the brunet spoke again.

“Would you have done any of it if you didn’t know I was your soulmate?”

And again, he didn't have an answer. Because in all honesty, he didn't know. Figuring that out was the impulse he needed to understand his own feelings, after all. But again, his lack of response was response enough.

"Yeah," his friend mumbled, then turned around, ready to go back to his room. The blond hurried to grab his hand to stop him.

"Wait, George-" The boy looked at him, with an expression difficult to read. "It's not a game, I'm not playing anything," he assured, the only thing he could say without a trace of doubt in his voice. "I was just- I wanted to..."

To make you fall in love with me.

"To know how it would feel?" George completed for him.

No. I wanted you to see how it felt.

"In a way, yeah," he said instead. The boy hummed, before offering him a faint smile.

"I get it, I- I know people want to do those things, with their soulmates." The brunet pursed his lips for a second, before returning to his previous expression. "But, you got me."

The blond's stomach twisted to the tone, a hidden apology underneath the spoken words.

"I'm glad it's you," he instantly said. The boy chuckled in response.

"I know you are." But it didn't feel like he knew, at least not in the way he needed him to. "But I just- I can't. I'm sorry."

Clay felt like he was punched in the face. Was he really reading everything wrong?

"I wanted- I wanted you to try. But, I can't. Things don't change like that, I- we both know that." The blond opened his mouth to talk, but once again, nothing came out. He just stood there, watching the British return to his room, with a knot in his stomach. And he didn't want to believe that was it, and he wanted to believe understood what was going on, but those words felt like they meant more than what they were.

With a sense of déjà vu, the boy offered him a faint smile, before closing the door slowly.

"Goodnight, Dream."

"Goodnight, George."

But George was already gone.

Chapter End Notes

thank you so much for all the comments, they make my day <3 and its interesting to see theres both team dream and team george people here ahaha

i havent reread the chapter so i apolgize for the typos i probably made

i hope youre liking the fic <3

[twitter](#)

Feeling

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

As a twenty-two years old *dreamer* with a romantic soul and a big heart, Clay wasn't new to heart break.

Through his life, he had learned the different kinds of pains love can put you through. Disappointment, betrayal, being left behind, falling outs... Too many to count, too young to know them all. And time and life also taught him, heart breaks weren't exclusively reserved for romantic affection. A family member leaving could break your heart too. Someone you trust going against you. Friends cutting you off without saying goodbye.

But no matter how many times he experienced it, and how much he's learned, he never expected it to happen again when it did. He never expected it to happen now.

He never expected to hurt, because of who was supposed to make him the happiest.

It's not like Clay was hurt that George didn't love him back. You can't help what you feel, you can't help who you love or don't love. He couldn't blame him for that, or hold it against him. He could handle rejection just fine, he could handle un-reciprocated feelings. Clay wasn't hurt *by* it, no. But it hurt regardless.

Knowing that your soulmate didn't want you was bad enough, thinking his attempts to change that might have stained the closest friendship he's ever had was... Beyond awful. God, he felt like shit. The more he thought about it, the more he noticed.

The way the brunet looked away every change he got, as if he tried to avoid his eyes when they talked. The sadness in his tone, the caution too. How uncomfortable he seemed, during the conversation. And that, without counting the fact that he hid in his room all day, purposely avoiding him. And maybe the embarrassment was a big part of it, that drove him to hide from him. But the way the conversation ended... It was clear George had only been playing along for him, trying to get to feel whatever the blond wanted him to. But he couldn't, and it was affecting him, and he was an ass for not realizing sooner.

Or maybe he was reading too much into it, maybe things were fine. But if that was the case, why hasn't he seen his friend all that day either?

Why did he spend the whole time downstairs, hoping to see him, hoping to be wrong about making things weird?

But he never came. He never saw him.

To be fair, he almost didn't see Sapnap all day either. But that wasn't all that weird, it happened before when they were the two of them too. And at least he saw him once, when he came down to get a bunch of food to bring to his room.

Being avoided a second day in a row was enough sign to confirm, things were indeed changing between them. But not in the way he had wanted. And that, that made him heartbroken. More than the rejection, more than the admission of not being able to love him. The fact that his best friend didn't want to be around him, even if temporary, was hurting him. And he only had himself to blame.

A part of him wanted to come clean. He wanted to ask the boy to talk and confess his feelings. He wanted to take them out of his head, so he could move on. And he would promise the brunet that, that he knew his feelings weren't reciprocated and would leave them behind. He wanted to promise him they could be platonic, so things could go back to normal.

But he was afraid. He was afraid George might avoid him even more, if he knew Clay liked him like that and has liked him this whole time. He was afraid he would be weirded out by his crush, and how it started before he himself even knew it.

He was afraid the Brit could get mad, if he knew the American hadn't just been trying to 'see how it felt' by doing the things he did but actually attempting to arouse romantic feelings in him. So he decided it was better to pretend that George's negative didn't affect him in the way he did.

He finally saw him at night.

Once he realized he was starting to doze off on the couch, he decided to make himself some food, eat dinner and call it a day, not wanting to be alone on the first floor anymore. And it was as he was cooking, that George came into the kitchen.

Clay's eyes widened instantly when he saw him, heart racing with excitement, surprise, and a bit of fear of what would happen next.

"Hi," he let out, voice slightly shaky. The boy offered him a faint smile.

"Hi," George replied, then looked at the pan. "What's that?"

"Steak," he replied, flipping the meat so it would cook to the other side. The brunet hummed, moving closer and sitting on the table.

"Smells good." The blond almost snorted, too used to his soulmate's cues to know what he was hinting at with his actions.

"Want some?" He asked, despite knowing the answer. "I made some rice too."

The boy nodded right away, and so the American grabbed another set of silverware, placing it in front of the Brit. He tried not to smile too much, trying to hide how ecstatic he was that George was willing to spend some time with him again even if just to eat.

"You must be starving," he commented, deciding small talk would help him act normal. "You didn't have lunch, did you?"

"I did, kinda." Clay raised an eyebrow to that, about to argue that he didn't see him downstairs once. "Sapnap got us some stuff, I ate a little."

"Oh." Okay, that explained the awfully large amount of things he got earlier. "You were with Sapnap?" He distributed the food in two plates and gave the boy one, before sitting down as well.

"Yeah, played some games," the Brit mumbled, starting to eat right away.

"I see."

He wasn't jealous that his two roommates were spending time together, not really. But made him feel off, to know that they didn't care to invite him. Because despite his friend's current behavior, that knowledge made him feel like the brunet still rather be without him if he could.

“George.” Before he could stop himself, the words were leaving his mouth. “Are we okay?”

The brunet stopped eating, looking at him. There was something in his eyes, something he couldn’t read.

“Yeah.”

“I’m sorry. I’m- If you’re mad I-”

“I’m not” the boy assured, cutting him off. “We’re fine, Dream. I’m not mad at you... There’s no reason to.” Clay pursed his lips, unconvinced but not knowing how to press without making things worse.

He focused on his food, eating quietly for a while and watching the boy do the same. But his mind was still bugging him, still feeling off.

“Are you sure?” George looked at him again, rolling his eyes.

“Yeah, we’re still-”

“Seriously? You’re eating?” Sappnap's voice got both of their attention, glancing at the boy walking in.

“I was hungry,” the brunet mumbled.

“What happened to the nachos with cheese we said we would get?”

“We can still get them.” The shortest boy snorted, shaking his head. The blond looked at them weirdly, confused by the exchange.

“Nachos with cheese? What?”

“Oh, we’re going out.” Sappnap mumbled. “And we were going to eat there but someone-”

“You’re going out?” The sour feeling on his stomach was hard to ignore. The youngest boy looked at him, nodding a few times.

“Yeah, we’re going clubbing.” The blond blinked a few times, alternating from looking at the brown-haired and to his best friend, who had his eyes fixed on his food.

“Clubbing?” Sappnap nodded again.

“Yep. I need a drink.” He moved closer to the brunet, patting his back. “And Gogy needs to get laid, so...” The British choked on his food, face quickly turning red and looking at his friend with panicked eyes.

“*Sappnap.*” He quickly glanced at Dream, expression scared as if he feared the blond’s reaction.

Clay tried to ignore the way his heart ached.

He shouldn’t be affected, he shouldn’t care. They were soulmates, but weren’t together. George made that pretty clear. Yet just by his reaction, he could tell the boy also understood how weird it was, talking about fucking someone else with the person that’s supposed to be meant for you. But they were friends, and friends talked about those things. And he needed to keep that in mind, if he wanted things to go back to how they used to be.

“I don’t- That’s *not*-”

“Just kidding.” Sapnap quickly said. “I’m the only one getting some action.”

The blond let out a laugh. Because truly, what else could he do?

“I’m gonna go get my things,” the brunet mumbled, standing up and leaving almost in a hurry.

As soon as the boy left, the American’s face shifted, the weight of the whole situation falling over him and some of the emotions he was feeling showing.

“You’re going out without me?” It hurt. It shouldn’t but it did.

“You don’t drink.” Sapnap excused, sitting in front of him. “Plus, it was my turn to have some quality time with George. You’ve been gate-keeping him.”

Clay wanted to protest, but he knew he was right. It’s not like they invited Sapnap to hang out with them every time that the brunet found his way to his room, and they had talked about going to places the blond wanted to show his best friend, just the two of them. If it wasn’t for the context, he wouldn’t be upset by it. So maybe he needed to chill, and let the two boys explore their friendship too. They should be allowed to.

Sapnap gave him a weird look, like he was reading right through him. He seemed to hesitate, before speaking in a more serious tone.

“Look, Clay... I know you like having him around, all for yourself. And I know you care about him. But maybe George needs more than just... *Movie nights*, and *hanging out* in your room.” The boy gave him a look again, with an expression he couldn’t read. “And I think it’s good that you do your own thing too, to see how you feel... You know, on your own.”

The boy glanced at him again, as if expecting him to say something. Clay hummed, trying to process the words. He wasn’t sure he was fully getting the idea, but he had a feeling his friend was right in whatever he was trying to say. It was true, in the time the Brit had been there most of their activities revolved around being together. And maybe that, plus the whole soulmate thing, was making it easier to cross lines that they were never supposed to cross. So maybe he needed to give George some space, and he needed time to figure himself out too.

Sapnap stood up, walking to his side. He gave him a hug with one hand before patting his back.

“Love you man.” He said. “Imma go get George.”

The blond nodded, mumbling a love you too before watching him leave. He decided then to finish his food and go to bed as originally planned. His mind was all over the place, and he was tired.

He didn’t wait for the boys to say goodbye, heading to his room straight away and getting ready to call it a night. And strangely enough, not long after he laid down, he started to doze off. Despite all the thoughts still in his head, despite the pain still in his chest, his body needed the rest. However, it didn’t last long.

Clay wasn’t a light sleeper. At all. But for some reason, he instantly woke up hearing the notification on his phone, groggily reaching for it to check it.

Sappy: dont wait up for me ☹ wont be coming back tonight

The blond blinked a few times, rubbing his eyes and rereading the message before scoffing,

shaking his head. Seemed like he wasn't kidding about getting some, after all. As soon as he thought that, his brain went somewhere else, his smile disappearing as he quickly typed a response. Just three words. *'What about George?'*

The same bitter feeling from earlier came back again as he saw the new text, closing his eyes and taking a deep breath.

Sappy: he left before me

Sappy: i wouldnt wait for him either if i were you

It was fine. That was fine. The sooner he accepted that the boy would do his life and move on, the sooner he could move on as well. They were friends, he needed to focus on that. If he wanted to fix their relationship, that's all he could be and aspire to be. If someone else was pleasing George, seeing his red cheeks and wet lips... If someone else was making him pant, making him grip at them as his body shook and let out soft sounds... It was none of his business. No matter how much he wanted to punch whoever that was right on the face.

He shifted on his bed, shutting his eyes close and trying to force himself to fall back asleep. And for a moment, it worked, somehow emotionally exhausted enough to disconnect again. But as before, it didn't last, eventually another noise waking him up. Louder than before, coming from downstairs.

He rubbed his eyes tiredly, sitting on his bed for a few seconds before getting off it to go to the first floor. Patches must have broken something by accident again trying to find her food. He lazily walked to the kitchen, but soon realized it wasn't his cat.

The brunet seemed equally surprised to see him there, holding a bottle of water as he closed the fridge.

"George," he mumbled, the boy offering a quiet hi in response. "I thought you were out."

"I was."

Clay hummed, then there was silence. They looked at each other, the boy shifting awkwardly. But no, that couldn't be awkward. He couldn't let it be awkward. He needed to act like he would have if they were still miles away, as if he never realized his feelings.

He checked the time on his phone, realizing it was earlier than he thought. He raised an eyebrow, smirking next.

"Was it *that* bad?" The brunet blinked a few times, blushing lightly before huffing.

"What do you mean? I don't know- I don't know what you mean."

"Oh, come on." He laughed. "Sapnap told on your ass, George. Don't act dumb." The boy's eyes widened, groaning in frustration next. "So if you're home already, it must have been a really bad fuck."

"I didn't fuck anyone." The blond raised an eyebrow again, the brunet blushed some more. "I didn't! I..." He seemed hesitant, like he wasn't sure he should be having that conversation or not.

"Last date I went in, she was really into bite marks," the American mumbled, the Brit seemed confused by why he was bringing that up. "It was pretty hot, to be fair... Until she decided to leave one on my dick." His friend's eyes widened again, a loud laughter escaping his lips instantly. Clay wheezed as well, a sense of accomplishment filling him. "I think I still have the mark, actually."

“Oh my god.”

“We didn’t go out again after that.”

“I can see why.” They giggled for a few more seconds, before the sounds died down. His soulmate seemed a bit more relaxed now, like a weight was lifted off him. “I wasn’t lying, I didn’t have sex with him- Them. Um, I didn’t-” The blond snorted, giving him a questioning look.

“I’m not gonna post it on twitter, George. You can admit you like men,” he interrupted him, with a teasing tone.

In the years they’ve known each other, the boy never once clarified the gender of the people he was with. At least not to him. He didn’t say much about his relationships or hookups in general, so it didn’t seem like a big deal. But as time passed, the blond had become curious about it. He never asked, not directly, deciding it wasn’t his place to do so. But he had a feeling, a hunch, and the way he worded *getting fucked* in their conversation a few days ago pretty much gave him away.

His friend suddenly seemed shy again, so he decided to talk again.

“So, why not? Was he ugly?” The brunet huffed, shaking his head.

“No, he just- he wanted to do it in his car, literally in the parking lot.” George’s cheeks reddened, embarrassment evident but neither of them addressed it. “And like, someone could’ve seen me, you know, and recognize me.”

“No, yeah, bad idea.”

“And- And he wanted me to suck him off, but he didn’t wanna do it for me.”

“*What?* ” Clay made an offended expression. “Who the fuck would turn down sucking *you* off? Like, *the* GeorgeNotFound?”

The brunet snorted, rolling his eyes with an amused smile.

“You’re an idiot.”

“I have to tweet this- No, for real, I have to.” The blond took his phone again, pretending to type. “What kind of moron wouldn’t want to suck GeorgeNotFound’s dick” he mumbled, as if he was reading aloud the words he was writing.

“You’re- You’re actually an idiot” his friend laughed, moving closer to try to take his phone.

“No, George, this is important.”

“Stop messing around.”

“I’m asking the real questions here.”

“You’re *not* tweeting that.”

“Why not? I would- I would break twitter. Instant trending topic,” he wheezed. The boy laughed louder, shaking his head. They continued to giggle for a few moments, before both sighing, with a smile on their faces. “No, but, for real. That guy was an ass.”

“Yeah” the Brit agreed. He looked at him for a few seconds, before looking away. “I wasn’t really into him, anyways.”

“Then why were you gonna, you know...?”

“I don’t know.” The boy shrugged, holding his own hands to sooth himself. “Thought it could help.”

“Help?” He questioned. The boy looked at him for a moment, hesitating, before shaking his head.

“I need to sleep” he declared, drinking some of the water he grabbed earlier before leaving the bottle on the counter. “M tired as fuck.”

“Yeah. Me too.”

“Goodnight, Dream,” his friend mumbled, walking to head upstairs. Clay watched him, chest feeling lighter now, a sense of normality giving him peace. Like maybe things would be okay after all.

“Wait, George?”

“Hm?”

“Love you.”

The boy offered him a faint smile in response, before turning around and leaving. The blond smiled again, hope returning to him. They could be just friends, things could work out.

The sound of the TV resonated in the room, the light of the screen the only one illuminating them. Dialogues that felt like comfort, a cold body leaning into him slightly, keeping his arm around the smaller frame and caressing his shoulder. Things were slowly going back to normal. A new normal, without distance as a barrier.

That moment in the kitchen really seemed to have brought them back to their routine, talking more the next day with their usual banter and jokes. They still weren’t hanging alone, still spending time apart, but there wasn’t awkwardness between them whenever they were in the same room without Sapnap.

He was still cautious, making sure he didn’t do anything he wouldn’t with other friends. He made sure to pay attention to the boy’s cues to figure out his comfort zones. And little by little, George stopped keeping space between them when they sat, and didn’t move away instantly when he accidentally touched him, getting comfortable around him as he should’ve been from the start. And it was nice.

Platonic. Like they were meant to be.

Even in the moments where their eyes met, staring at each other for a little too long. Even when they accidentally moved too close. Even when he could swear some old tension was about to blossom again. Even when he wanted nothing more but to kiss him senseless and ruin their friendship.

It was some hard four days, but he was happier like this; denying his own feelings; than missing him. And now, with Sapnap having to leave for a date, they were finally doing something together, just the two of them. And he was determined to make it work, to show he was okay being friends.

George was letting him touch him more, being closer than they’ve been in days. He wasn’t going

to screw this up.

His thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a soft scoff, watching the boy shake his head before focusing on the movie again. Apparently, the main character had decided to give in and spend the night with his love interest, despite knowing she would have to leave the next day and never see him again.

Clay hummed, looking at his friend again.

“What’s so funny?”

“It’s not,” the brunet mumbled. “It’s just- she’s being stupid.”

“Stupid?”

“Yeah.” He nodded. “Like, she can’t be with him, so, why would she do that?”

“I think that’s the reason.” His friend raised an eyebrow to his words. “I mean, this is like, her only chance. She wants to be with him, even if it is only one time.”

“That’s stupid.” Gorge rolled his eyes, Clay frowned lightly.

“Why is it stupid?”

“Because... She’ll know what she’s missing now. If you only think about it but never have it, then you can just, push it away. It’s easy. But if you have memories of what it feels? It’s like, harder. How can she move on now? How can she leave?”

The blond hummed, thinking for a second, before shrugging.

“I dunno. I think I would do the same,” he mumbled, offering the boy a faint smile. “I’d rather have him once, even knowing he won’t be mine, than never have him at all.”

George stared at him, going quiet for a second, as if processing his words. He shifted, looking down at his hands for a moment and playing with them before looking at the screen again. The American focused on the movie again, but soon enough, the brunet spoke again.

“It’s like, when you edited my video.” The blond frowned, glancing at him confusedly.

“What?”

“I wanted you to edit my video, but like, I didn’t really know what it was like. But then you did it, and I liked it. So now I want you to do it all the time,” he tried to explain. “If you didn’t do it that one time, I would’ve eventually moved on.”

“You think so?” He questioned. “I think the idea was already in your head, and you’ve kept insisting until you got what you wanted.” He chuckled lightly. His friend huffed, rolling his eyes.

Clay thought for a moment, watching the film just for a few seconds before shrugging.

“I don’t know. I just think that if I was her, I would just keep thinking about the guy. If I liked him that much, and didn’t do something about it when I had the chance... I wouldn’t be able to move on, because I would still want him. So, I would rather have him once, than never.”

The brunet had his eyes fixed on him, taking in every word with lips pursed. He seemed conflicted, in a way, and felt like he wanted to say something. But he was quiet, simply looking at him, still

playing with his own fingers. After a moment, he hesitated, then spoke again.

“And you think you could live with that? With just once?” The blond nodded slowly.

“Yeah, think so.”

“I don’t know... That’s kinda... Kinda scary.”

“Scary? That thought scares you?” The American raised an eyebrow. The boy didn’t respond, but he didn’t have to. How nervous he looked spoke for itself. “But George, you’re one of the bravest people I know.”

The brown eyes were on him instantly, between surprised and confused. Clay offered him a smile, shifting to look at him more directly, placing his hand on his shoulder and caressing it softly.

“You literally put your faith in me with the whole YouTube thing, you left your whole life behind to come here, too. You’re always taking risks because you know what you want, and you go for it,” he said, with a proud tone. “That’s brave, George. I just, I don’t see why you would be scared of something like that.”

As before, the boy didn’t answer. Once again, he stared at him. There was something in his face, something he couldn’t name, but the intensity of it was both intriguing and captivating.

“I just... What if once isn’t enough?” He finally whispered. “What if you’ve felt like that for so long, that once you give in you just... Get hooked forever.” The boy swallowed, glancing at his hands. The blond squeezed his shoulder, reassuring. Because he knew how hard it was for his friend to give insight on how he felt about things. “I don’t know if I could let go. That’s what’s scary.”

“Could you let go the other way around?” The American asked, in a soft tone. “Like, if it’s feelings you’ve had for a while... There’s a reason they’re not gone, right?” He questioned, the boy averted his eyes. “I think that’s why she did it, because... She tried the alternative and didn’t work.”

George didn’t seem to have an answer to his words, shifting awkwardly on his spot. His demeanor changed, now seeming more anxious, more in his head. Concern instantly invaded Clay, moving closer to the boy and letting his hand reach for the boy’s jaw, wanting to make him look at him. But apparently, his friend had a similar idea, also turning abruptly to look at him again and moving closer too.

The blond’s eyes widened, their noses bumping and lips almost touching. He pulled away just enough so they would crash against each other, but still stayed in the boy’s space. The brunet’s eyes were as big as his own, seemingly taken back. But then, he glanced down at the American’s mouth.

Clay’s stomach twisted with the memories of what that gesture had led to before, an impulse taking over him. Before he could think twice, he closed the gap between them, placing a short peck on his soulmate’s lips.

He moved away instantly, eyes widening even more to his own actions.

What the fuck.

“I’m *so* sorry- I don’t know why I-”

A pair of lips shut him up, George stopping his sentence with a real kiss. The blond’s heart raced,

hands finding the boy's cheek and cupping them to pull him closer. Mouths danced with each other needily, asking for more, demanding for more, soon adding tongue and playing together with desperation in the tone.

He didn't know what was going on, or why it was happening. He didn't understand what was happening at all. But he couldn't find it in him to care. All he could think of was how good the boy tasted, how hot his tongue was, how his hands gripped at his shirt.

The brunet broke the kiss abruptly, panic on his face.

"*Shit.*" Fear was in his tone, frozen on his spot. "I- I didn't mean to do that."

"It's okay," the American instantly assured, but the Brit shook his head.

"No, it's not, I shouldn't."

"I wanted it," Clay cut him off. *I wanted you.* "I want this." *I want us.*

George's expression changed to surprise, speechless as he stared at him. The blond moved closer, and their lips met again. He let his hands caress the boy's arms, melting into the gesture when the boy began to respond again. But all too soon, he was pulling away again, now with caution all over his face.

"What do you- what do you mean?" He questioned, in a whisper.

"I wanted to kiss you," the blond let out, before he could stop himself.

Because the brunet had been responsive... Hell, he had kissed him first. And Clay could sin of being too hopeful, too naive. And he wanted to believe it meant something. He so desperately wanted it to mean more than just reacting out of instinct.

"I... Fuck, I can't help it," he admitted, taking a deep breath. "Sometimes when I look at you, all I wanna do is kiss you." He could feel his heart racing, beating out of his chest. This was it, he needed to say it. "George, you're my soulmate, I-"

The way his friend's expression changed was so abrupt his own words died in his mouth, unable to continue as he watched the spark that was in his eyes suddenly disappear, pursed lips and shock replaced for something that he could only read as either disgust or disappointment.

George pulled away, looking at the tv with a poker face. And it was clear then, that no matter what made him act the way he did before, his sentence had brought him back to reality. The boy closed his eyes, taking a deep breath and placing his hands over his own knees. He clenched his fists, trembling lightly. Clay felt like absolute shit.

George was upset. He was evidently upset.

"I'm sorry," he let out in a whisper, eyes watering against his will as his own wave of sadness and disappointment hit him.

"Can we just watch the movie?" The Brit's voice was shaky, not looking at him as he spoke.

"I'm sorry."

"It's fine."

Silence fell over them. The blond wanted to scream.

Was it always going to be this way? Would he always cave into his desires, running their friendship further and further?

He didn't want that to happen. He didn't want to lose his best friend. He wasn't even sure why he did that just now. At least this time, the boy stayed by his side. But could he really take that as a good sign?

"Are we--"

"We're okay," the brunet instantly said, looking at him for just a second to offer him a weak smile before focusing on the screen again.

He wasn't sure he could believe him, but he didn't want to not believe.

Hesitating for a second, he reached for George's hand, needing to feel his touch and the reassurance. The boy didn't pull away, silently interlocking their fingers instead. Because touching your soulmate could help, it was soothing and calming, and they both needed that right now. Ironical how they were each other's comfort, even when they were each other's reason to be upset in the first place.

"I love you," he whispered, because after all that, he needed to make clear that's still how he felt. That he would always love him, and that was the most important thing for him.

The brunet squeezed his hand in response, offering him another weak smile. And usually, that would've been okay. He was used to the boy non-verbal reactions to his words. But right now, it hurt. Right now it didn't feel like enough. Because maybe *he* was the one that needed that to be made clear, that they both loved each other no matter what. And that they would find a way to get out of the mess he has created.

"Why do you never say it back?" He couldn't help but ask. The boy looked at him, blinking a few times. He opened his mouth, but nothing came out, biting his lips next. He seemed conflicted, and taken back. Probably because he wasn't expecting the question.

"I... Can't."

"Why?" Clay pressed. George sighed, looking away.

"I just can't." The said, tone defensive.

The blond sighed, disappointed and still hurt, letting go of his hand to pull away. But the brunet took it again, squeezing it. He looked at him anxiously, a plea writing on his face, begging for something the American couldn't understand. He just kept a straight and serious face. The British opened his mouth, then closed it again. He cursed under his breath, before turning to face the screen again instead of him, closing his eyes tightly.

"Because... Because we don't mean it the same way." Clay's heart stopped beating. George took a sharp breath, suddenly standing up. "I'm going to bed." Without waiting for an answer, the boy left.

The blond sat there, emotions all over the place and breath stuck on his throat. Because there weren't many ways to read that sentence, there weren't many ways to get it wrong.

The brunet knew. He knew their feelings were different.

Had he figured out about his crush before he himself did? Was that why he hasn't said those words

to him in years?

Suddenly, he didn't want to stay up either. He wasn't even sure how he got to his bed, mind so full of thoughts he could barely focus. He got under the blankets, staring at his ceiling, wanting to cry or scream or get mad, but feeling completely empty. Numb. He was numb.

Soulmates were supposed to prevent you from this. The pain of heartbreak, the rejection of unreciprocated feelings. Yet here he was, emotions shuttered and not knowing what to do with himself.

He closed his eyes, begging for sleep to take him, begging his brain to shut up. But of course, that wasn't his luck. He was wide awake, unable to get any rest. Time passed, could be minutes of hours, but stayed the same. Laying down, too tired to do anything, not tired enough to sleep. The only comfort he had was Patches sleeping on her bed a few steps away. And time continued to pass, more and more. Until a sound caught his attention.

Clay opened his eyes, blinking a few times, unsure if he actually heard it or not until it happened again. A knock on his door. He frowned, sitting up in his bed before talking.

"Yes?" George opened his door carefully, looking at him from the frame of it.

"Can I come in?" He whispered, voice sounding raspy. And despite his best judgment, he nodded.

"Yeah."

The boy stepped inside, slowly walking closer until he stood by his bed. He looked tired, and his eyes were reddish and puffy like he hadn't slept in days.

... Or as if he had been crying.

The brunet took a deep breath, before suddenly getting into the bed, crawling to the blond's side. The American's eyes widened, taken back by the sudden action.

"George...?"

"Did you mean it?" His friend let out, with a shaky voice. Clay blinked, confused by his words. "When you said once is better than never, did you mean it?" He blinked again, surprised that he was bringing that up again. Surprised by the whole scene, actually, not understanding why the boy would come to his room just to ask that. Yet he still nodded. "You really think it's possible to be happy with just that?" There was some sense of urgency on the brunet's voice, begging eyes adding to it. So the blond nodded again.

"Yeah."

And just like that, George moved closer, pressing their lips together. Clay gasped, caught off guard by the abrupt gesture, feeling hands on his shoulders. But not a second later, he was kissing the boy back, his own hands placed on his friend's hips. Their mouths moved slowly, a different kind of intensity in the way they danced together.

The brunet shifted, straddling his lap as he deepened the kiss, licking his bottom lip to ask for access. The blond broke the kiss, against his body's wishes. He looked at the boy confusedly, a million questions written on his face.

"George, what do you- What are you doing?"

“Being brave.”

The Brit pulled away some more, just enough to take the edges of his own shirt and take it off, throwing it away. The American’s eyes widened again, mouth slightly open as he examined the bare chest of his best friend. Heat pooled on Clay’s stomach, heart racing instantly to the view and the implications of the previous conversation.

“Is this okay?” George asked. “Can I try- Can we do this?” The blond had never nodded faster in his life.

The boy lifted his hips to quickly remove his pants as well, sitting back down with only his underwear on. And then, he raised one finger.

The memories of their first kiss came flying back to him. And he knew what that meant.

Just one.

One time to have each other. One time to go all in, take as much as needed, before moving on.

Clay took his shirt off as well, lips crashing together next without wasting a second. His hands explored the new exposed skin, touching as much as he could, caressing every single corner as if trying to memorize every detail of his body. The brunet sighed into the kiss, pulling the blankets away to sit directly over the blond’s lap; ass right over his already hardening dick. And as soon as he felt it, he began to rock his hips, grinding down on him slowly.

The American threw his head back, a soft sound escaping his lips, hands gripping at the boy’s thighs. George reached for one of his hands, placing it over his clothed member.

“Touch me too,” he demanded. “Properly this time.”

Clay took a sharp breath, nodding quickly and complying right away. He drew the shape of his soulmate’s dick with his finger, before wrapping his hand around it, still over his clothes. And god, the sound he got in response was *heavenly*.

Every movement of the boy’s hips sent shivers down his spine, breathing getting uneven and desire growing stronger. And he wasn’t sure why George was giving him that, why he had decided to give him his one time. He wasn’t sure if it was so the blond could move on as he proclaimed he would in that situation, if maybe that was his way to help him get it out of his system so they could save their friendship. But whatever the reason was, he would take the chance and do what he said he would.

He would make love to him, pour all his feelings into the dance on their bodies, and live happily after with only the memory.

“Clothes off.” The brunet’s voice made him take a sharp breath, bossy in a whole new way that he couldn’t say he disliked.

They quickly got rid of their underwear, his mouth watering to the image of the boy he loved fully naked. God fuck, he was gorgeous. There wasn’t anything about him that wasn’t perfect. The Brit also looked at him, examining him with his eyes before breathing deeply.

“I’m gonna need you to stretch me more,” he declared, a blush taking over his cheeks. “I- I already did but... Shit, you’re big.”

The moan that escaped him was almost embarrassing. But the boy didn’t mock him, kissing him

again instead. Their bodies pressed together, his soulmate shifting his hips again to make their members rub together. God, he was on fire. He could barely think. He just wanted the boy, and he wanted him now.

He placed his hands on the smaller hips, ready to turn him around and laid him on the bed. But George placed his own hands over his, to stop his movements, reading his intentions.

“No, I wanna ride you.”

Clay’s brain disconnected, moaning again.

Holy fuck, *yes*. Yes he wanted that too.

The way George was acting, it was like *he* was the one taking what he wanted from him. Like this wasn’t just a favor, or a means to an end. He moved his body like he wanted to be pleased, he demanded things like he knew he should be the focus, like this was a fantasy of his. He kissed him like he needed it. He touched him like he’s been wanting to. And Clay absolutely loved it.

The boy took one of his hands, guiding it to his ass. The blond got the memo, gripping at it and massaging it for a moment before letting his fingers find his friend’s entrance. He easily slid one finger in, further proving his soulmate’s words of being prepared for it. The brunet’s body twisted over him, a pleased sound escaping his lips, rocking his hips to feel him more. So he moved his digit in an out, fucking him with it.

“Shit, oh *god*, more” his soulmate breathed out, allowing Clay’s other hand to caress his sides. “Another one.”

How could he possibly say no to that?

He pushed a second finger inside, giving him a few seconds to get used to it before thrusting. They weren’t moving as easily as before, his hand being bigger than his friend’s. So he was careful, and gentle, yet still picking up the pace when he was asked.

“Another.”

“George-”

“I want you inside, Dream.” Despite the lack of stimulation, he almost came just hearing that. “Just finish stretching me already, please.”

“Hold on.”

He carefully took his fingers out, reaching for the drawer of his nightstand, taking out his bottle of lube and a condom. He quickly poured some lube on his fingers, not wanting to hurt the boy, before going back to what he was doing.

He got the first two inside as before, thrusting in and out a couple more times before pushing a third digit inside him. The boy took a sharp breath, whining and holding onto him, then moved his hand down to reach for the blond’s dick. Clay groaned to the feeling of fingers wrapped around him, closing his eyes for a moment as he felt his friend stroking him lightly. He let himself enjoy the moment, soft pleased sighs coming out, before focusing on his own task again.

The way George would quickly adapt to him was impressive, not taking long for him to move his fingers with ease, as if his body was made to take him. He spread his digits apart, trying to stretch him enough, before pushing them deeper inside, then twisting them to find that special spot he

knew would bring him the most pleasure. The boy's full body shook, a louder moan coming out as he held tighter onto him.

"*Dream.*" God, that sound would be forever saved in his memory. "Fuck, that's- that's enough" he breathed out. "I'm ready."

"You sure?"

The brunet nodded a few times in response, and so the blond pulled his hand away. He reached for the condom next, quickly working on covering himself with it. As soon as it was on, his soulmate moved closer, holding his dick with his hand again. Clay groaned as before, watching as the boy aligned his member with his stretched entrance.

Both took a deep breath, then George moved down.

He couldn't help the moan that came out when his tip found his way inside his soulmate. A wave of pleasure spread through his whole body, panting heavily as the brunet pushed his hips down, slowly taking more of him in. The boy was panting as well, dick already leaking pre-cum despite just starting. His cheeks were flushed red, hair sticking to his forehead with sweat.

Clay placed his hands on his friend's hips, trying to offer some assistance. Until finally, he was fully in.

"*Fuck.*" The blond closed his eyes, taking a deep breath, overwhelmed by the feeling of the brunet's walls squeezing him. He's never felt anything as good as that, and he was sure then, he would never *ever* find anything remotely similar.

The boy was still, giving himself time to adapt to the intrusion, but still panting heavily and dick twitching against his stomach. The American instantly reached for it, wanting to give his neglected member some attention. But the Brit stopped him, shaking his head.

"Don't." Clay blinked a few times, confused by the reaction.

"I'm sorry...?" He mumbled, unsure if he was supposed to apologize or not. George shook his head.

"No, it's just..." His face turned a dark shade of red, pursing his lips and looking away. "If you do that- I'll- just..." He groaned in frustration, biting his lips before talking again. "I'm already close."

The blond blinked again, but then, it clicked. And the boy's embarrassment was clearer now. He almost felt bad, knowing he was at least partially a reason why his friend was self-conscious about being close already. So he closed the distance between them, kissing him deeply, passionately. His soulmate gasped into the kiss, wrapping his arms around his neck. Clay broke the kiss, just to press his lips against the boy's throat, nipping at his skin.

"That's so hot," he whispered, placing open mouthed kisses on his neck. George whined in response. "God, I love when you feel good. Wanna make you cum already." The boy took a sharp breath, hips starting to move to his words. The blond moaned to the feeling, biting his friend in response. "I'm- I won't last long either" he admitted.

There was something about fucking the person you're in love with, after being deprived of feeling them for so long... It was hard to not give in to the pleasure building in.

George began to pick up the pace, lifting his hips to take half of his dick out just to sit back down

on it, alternating between moving up and down and back and forward. Clay could only moan in response, the boy's actions overwhelming his senses, hands caressing and squeezing at his thighs to add to his pleasure. The movements got faster, shifting harder. The American's own hips joined the dance, thrusting into the boy, making him moan louder.

Their bodies pressed closer together, George's dick rubbing against his stomach, pre-cum leaking over his skin. He joined their mouths once again, exploring it with his tongue. The brunet kept bouncing over him, moving the ways he knew he would enjoy himself the most. And the blond was all for it, every pleased sound pushing him closer to his release.

The Brit held tightly onto him, movements erratic and barely able to keep coordinated. Clay placed his hands on his hips, guiding him to help him keep hitting the right spot, doing his best to ignore the building pressure inside him and focusing on getting George to his own relief.

"Oh god, Dream, fuck, Dream! 'M gonna cum, I'm- touch me now, please, 'm gonna-"

The blond wrapped his hand around his dick instantly, caressing the tip before stroking him hard. Once, twice.

George moaned loudly, cumming all over his hand. And that was enough to push him over the edge as well, filling the condom with a guttural groan.

The boy collapsed over him, limbs suddenly weak. He held him tightly but gently, giving him time to come down from his high and taking time himself to calm down and regulate his breathing. They stayed like that for a couple of seconds, recovering from the intensity of what they just did, before George carefully lifted his hips, and Clay took his dick out of him. He threw the condom to the trash can, then reached for some tissues to clean the boy.

The brunet laid on the bed by his side, chest still visibly moving as he tried to breathe normally again. The blond laid by his side, hesitating for a second before taking his hand. They stayed silent for a couple more seconds, before the Brit slowly shifted to lay on his side, back at him. And the American almost got worried, but then he heard his friend talk, in a quiet voice.

"Spoon me?"

Clay felt like he could melt. He wrapped his arms around him instantly, holding him close and carefully. He placed soft kisses over his shoulder, wanting to show him affection and care.

"You okay?" He asked then. "Do you need something? Water? Pills?"

"'M good," the boy mumbled, placing his hands over the blond's to keep him close. "Tired, though."

"Wanna sleep?" His friend nodded slowly to words.

The American hummed, quickly pulling the covers over them before hugging the boy again. He continued to place soothing kisses on his shoulder, letting his soulmate relax, and relaxing as well. A part of him didn't want to fall asleep. A part of him wanted to stay awake for as long as possible, to prolong that moment for as long as he could. Because he knew the moment he woke up, and a new day came, everything would be over and he would have to stay true to his word. But the truth was, after all that... He wasn't so sure he could, anymore.

Maybe he was wrong, and George was right all along. Because now that he knew how the boy felt, and how it felt to be loved by him... He wasn't sure how he could survive without it. He's bitten the apple, now he was forever cursed.

But he had to figure out a way to live knowing what he's lost. He had to figure out a way to pretend he didn't give up on the best person he could've ever fallen in love with. He had to figure out a way to move on despite knowing he would never love anyone as he loved him.

Despite his wishes, his brain began to shut down. And sooner rather than later, he was falling asleep. But as on previous days, he didn't stay asleep long.

A sudden movement, not discrete enough for his cautious mind. Clay opened his eyes slowly, noticing a shadow grow distant as the warmth by his side slid away.

Just like that, he was wide awake. He reached to grab George's wrist, stopping him from fully getting out of bed. The boy froze on his spot. The blond's heart squeezed on his chest, a bitter feeling invading him. It was too soon, he wasn't ready yet. He needed to have him for a moment longer.

"Don't leave," he whispered, pulling at the boy's hand. "Please, not tonight."

Not like every previous time they shared physical affection.

Don't run away just yet.

The brunet took a sharp breath, staying still, not making any effort to get free but not laying down again.

"Dream..." A broken voice, raspy and shaky.

"Please," he begged. It was pathetic, but what else could he do to protect his heart? "Stay, just this once. Just for tonight."

The boy stayed quiet for a moment, before nodding, carefully laying down again and covering himself. The blond wrapped his arm around him again, George placed his hand over his own as before. Then he heard it, a soft sniffing sound.

Clay's eyes widened.

"George, are you crying?"

"No." He was lying. He could tell he was. The sour feeling inside him grew, feeling like he could cry too.

"What's... What's wrong?" He asked, despite knowing the answer. His soulmate took a sharp breath.

"I just slept with my best friend."

It hurt. Hearing how upset he was, how sad he sounded, how regret was all over his tone, it hurt. He wanted to make him feel better, he wanted to make him see it wasn't bad. He wanted to tell him it was okay, that there were reasons why it was. He wanted to show him there was no need to regret. And he wanted, still to that point, to make him change his mind.

"I'm... I'm more than just that to you, am I not?" He whispered, not completely sure who he was really comforting with that.

I'm your soulmate, George.

The boy let out a bittersweet chuckle.

“That makes it worse, doesn’t it?”

He wasn’t completely sure of what that meant. He wasn’t sure if this was the right moment to ask, either. He didn’t want to do anything that could make things even more sour.

Clay moved closer to him, wrapping his arms around him tightly.

“Can I just, hold you? Can we be okay tonight, and just sleep?”

George nodded, letting out a breathy ‘yeah’. But it was hard to sleep. And they weren’t okay.

And in his twenty-two years, and everything he’s experienced in terms of love, this was the most painful type of heartbreak.

Chapter End Notes

we love long chapters in this household (or so i hope ahah)

i love seeing all your theories and the two bands giving support to each of those dorks, honestly thank you for making this experience more entertaining ahah <3 also i just love your comments in general

last chapters always take me a little more time, so i'll probably gonna be posting at the end of the week/beginning of the next one :]

have a great day everyone!

[twitter](#)

Hearing

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Waking up alone wasn't surprising. But it hurt just the same. The realization that it wasn't a dream, things actually happened, and George had left him once again after what they did, was too much to handle first thing in the morning.

The bed felt empty and cold without the body next to him, his brain mourning the loss of a goodbye he never got. Only two text messages explaining the departure as if to compensate for the lack of spoken words. *'Sorry for leaving, I needed a shower'* and *'we're okay'*. This time, he didn't believe it. Nothing felt okay.

How could he possibly be okay after that? After making love to his soulmate, just to be left alone right after, dealing with the knowledge that he would never have him again?

But he had no one but himself to blame. No matter how you looked at it, it was his fault.

He was the one that stupidly believed once was better than none, and convinced the boy that it was possible to be happy and move on with just that. He brought it on himself, he agreed to terms he recklessly thought he would be able to meet. But he was wrong. George wasn't in the wrong for leaving, that was always going to be the outcome. He was the one that fucked up.

And now he had to find a way to push away his feelings, bury them deep inside him, and forget he ever fell in love with his best friend. For the sake of their friendship.

He needed to get his shit together, and act normal. Make breakfast, eat with his friends like he would normally do, and spend time together like he was supposed to.

He took a deep breath, tried to stand up. A sharp pain on his chest, and trembling hands. He pressed his lips together, trying to stop the tears from coming out.

He couldn't do it. He couldn't pretend he wasn't hurt. He couldn't pretend he wasn't madly in love and still wanted a chance. He couldn't forget the feeling of skin against his skin, hands roaming through his body, lips that tasted like heaven and hell and everything in between. The warmth of his soulmate, the pretty sounds he made, the way he closed his eyes and parted his lips as he moved his hips to seek his own pleasure.

He couldn't do it. He couldn't give up on George.

He fell back down on his bed, curling up and hugging his pillow, inhaling deeply because fuck, it still smelled like him. He had to move on, he had to keep his promise. But he wasn't ready yet. He wasn't ready either the second time he woke up. Or the third. He turned around in his bed, and let sleep claim him again. He wasn't ready either after he showered and checked his texts again, seeing a couple from the boy asking if he was going to go downstairs. He let his sheets tempt him again, unconsciousness feeling like safety and still exhausted despite doing nothing but sleep all day.

He wasn't ready at night either, but hunger was pulling a number on him, and so he finally crawled out of his room, keeping a straight face as he found his way downstairs.

The first thing he saw once he got to the first floor was a lump of blankets on the couch. A head

peered out from the mess, big brown eyes meeting his green ones.

“Dream.”

His heart skipped a beat, a fake smile appearing.

“George.”

He had to be ready.

The blond hesitated for a moment, before moving closer to the boy, who was already sitting up on his spot. He looked around, noticing the lack of lighting and that the tv was off, before raising an eyebrow.

“Why were you laying on the couch in the dark?”

“Fell asleep.” He snorted to his answer, offering him an amused smile. The boy smiled shyly in response.

“Why were you here though? I mean, if you weren’t watching anything?”

“I...” The brunet made an awkward face, looking away. “I thought you might come downstairs,” he admitted quietly, shrugging next. “And, um, I didn’t wanna stay in my room and make it seem like...”

Like he was avoiding him.

The American’s smile faltered for a second, but quickly recovered, trying to keep up his chill and collected act.

“I kinda assumed you’d need some space so...” He shrugged, as if staying locked inside his bedroom wasn’t for his own selfish reasons. George’s expression twisted, showing an emotion he couldn’t read in time before it was gone, a weak smile back on his face.

“Right.”

The air felt tense. He felt awkward, almost uncomfortable. But he had to remind himself, he promised things would be okay and what they did was for the better. He needed to play the part.

“You hungry? Imma make food.”

The brunet’s eyes widened slightly, his smile seemingly more sincere as he nodded, quickly standing up next. The blond began to walk to the kitchen, glancing at the boy to make sure he was following him, until they reached the fridge. He began to check then what they had.

“What do you wanna eat?” He asked, looking through the options.

“Anything’s fine,” his friend mumbled. Clay glanced at him again, raising an eyebrow. His wording was a little more compliant than he expected, normally either stating a craving or saying he didn’t care or didn’t know. The boy noticed his stare, looking away and shrugging.

The American tried not to overthink it.

“Alright...” He hummed, checking the freezer next. “What about... Fruit salad with vanilla ice cream? We have some strawberries, bananas...”

“Sounds good,” the Brit cut him off, as if he was ready to agree with whatever the blond could suggest. Clay nodded, taking out the fruit and placing it over the table.

“Can you get me a cutting board?” He asked, as he headed to get a knife. The boy nodded in response, walking to the cabinet and slowly bending down to reach for the last drawer.

The blond noticed how slow his movements were, making a weird face as he stood again and awkwardly walked to his side to place the cutting board on the table for him. He stared at his friend for a few seconds, like examining with his eyes, until his brain finally connected the dots.

“Does it hurt?” He instantly asked. The boy blinked in response, seemingly confused. “Your... Legs- um, hips? Just- are you sore?” He stumbled over his words. George’s cheeks instantly turned red.

“No- I- I’m fine” the boy mumbled awkwardly.

“Are you sure? You looked like you were in pain when you bent-”

“It’s just- It’s nothing,” his friend cut him off, face blushed with embarrassment. “It’s not a big deal.”

The conversation was weird, context considered. He knew that. And it could be a bit uncomfortable to talk about it, especially so soon. But the boy was still his best friend, and he still cared for him. And he knew a part of moving on should include talking about what they did in a normal way, as they would with any other shared experience. He needed to normalize it, show there was nothing wrong with mentioning it, that he wasn’t affected by it.

“I’m sorry, I should’ve gotten you some meds or something,” he said, offering him an apologetic smile, and trying to remain calm like the memory was just that. “Was I too harsh? Did I go too far?” The brunet scoffed in response, rolling his eyes

“I was the one-” *riding you*, Clay completed the sentence in his head for him. “So it’s not- I mean-”

“I still *helped*,” he protested. “And I know I can get carried away sometimes, use a little too much strength or, you know, so I’m sorry if...”

“Oh my god stop apologizing idiot, I liked it,” the boy groaned, between frustrated and still embarrassed with what they were talking about. “And I’m not even hurt, it’s normal to be sore when you haven’t-”

“You liked it?”

He couldn’t help but interrupt, brain stuck on those words, eyes fixed on the boy’s face with surprise written all over. George instantly went quiet, eyes widened as he realized what he said. The room stayed silent for a few seconds, the brunet looking down to his feet as he shifted awkwardly.

“Dream, I- I mean, I *came*-”

“Yeah but, you can feel good, enjoy *the act* and all, and still...” He paused for a second. He knew he shouldn’t press it, he should leave it at that. Yet again, a spark of hope pushed him to speak again, repeating his question. “You liked it?”

The Brit’s previous reddish face had lost all color, anxiety in all his features as he played with his

own fingers. He opened his mouth to talk, then closed it again. Clay sighed to himself, shaking his head. He needed to drop it. He shouldn't have asked at all. His friend seemed conflicted and that talk wouldn't make moving on any easier.

"I... Yeah. I did," the brunet whispered, but the blond had already settled his mind on not letting the answer affect him no matter what it was. You can like something without that having a bigger meaning, after all. So he simply hummed in response, turning around to walk to the cabinet and check the first drawer to get some painkillers.

"Here, take this," he said, as he got one pill for him. The boy frowned in confusion.

"Why do you keep those there and not in the bathroom?"

"I- I don't know, actually?" Clay chuckled. "My mom- she always kept meds in the kitchen so I just- You know what? That's a good question." He laughed, the boy giggling softly in response as well.

The blond grabbed a glass of water next before walking to stand in front of his friend, offering both things. The brunet took the pill first, drinking some of the water to swallow it before giving him the glass back. The American placed his hand over the boy to take the cup, but stopped moving the moment their fingers touched. He looked down at their hands, brown eyes doing the same.

Despite everything, the contact was still soothing, calming. Despite everything, George still felt like peace.

He quickly took his hand again, the feeling causing his chest to feel heavy. He went back to cut the fruit, ready to ignore all the messy emotions inside him and focus on the food.

"So, what did you like exactly? The little roughness, or the size of my dick?" He decided to joke, because that's something he was good at.

George choked with his spit.

"What is *wrong* with you?"

Just like that, he was wheezing. And wanted it or not, laughter was contagious, the Brit cracking up as well seconds later.

"Wrong with *me*? I'm not the one that has like, a pain and size different kink or something."

"You're such an idiot. You're- You're actually an idiot." Their laughter grew, their usual banter coming naturally to them. And it felt nice, to still manage to joke around.

He continued cutting the fruit for a few more moments after that, more relaxed now as whatever tension he had created was gone again. And once he was finally done, he turned around, ready to get the ice cream from the fridge. But turned out, George had already gotten it, sneakily eating some with a spoon as he watched the American do all the job.

"Why are you *eating* already?"

"Was hungry."

"I'm literally making something for- okay, give me that now," he huffed, moving closer to get the ice cream from the boy. George moved to the side, trying to dodge him. The blond scoffed at his action. "Stop messing around, give it to me-" The brunet chuckled, moving to dodge him again,

with no other reason other than to annoy him.

“But it’s good, I wanna eat more.”

“You *are* gonna eat more, once I put it in a cup with the fruit.”

“I wanna eat it now, though,” the boy mumbled, before getting another spoon and putting it in his mouth to eat it slowly. Clay rolled his eyes, once again trying to get closer to him. George moved back, until his back was pressed against the counter. The blond stood in front of him right away, both hands grabbing the ice cream to take it from him.

“Wait,” the boy stopped him. “Just one more.” And before he could respond, he took one more spoon and ate it as before. The American huffed.

“You’re such a brat” he let out.

“*What?* ” The boy raised his eyebrows, seemingly amused as he spoke, with the spoon still on his mouth. “What did you just call me?”

“A brat, George. You’re a spoiled brat.” He placed his fingers on the spoon handle and quickly took it from him, placing both that and the ice cream in the counter behind the boy, half caging him against it in the process. “You always get whatever you want.”

He looked directly at the boy, brown orbs already staring at him. Their eyes met, and suddenly his friend’s playful behavior changed, a different look in his face as the air in the room shifted. George placed his hands over Clay’s arms, as if to keep him in place.

The blond looked at the gesture, then back at his face. The brunet licked his lips.

“Do I?” he whispered. “Do I really, Dream?”

Clay wanted to shut him up.

He wanted to kiss his stupid mouth.

He wanted to pick him up, sit him on the counter and kiss him until they couldn’t breathe.

The Brit glanced at his lips, then back at his eyes. The American took a step closer. The boy’s pupils showed something that reminded him of hope, his demeanor nervous. He felt like he couldn’t think, intoxicated by their proximity and the growing tension.

Another step closer, George closed his eyes, holding his breath.

Clay stopped, memories instantly flooding his brain.

‘So, are we gonna ignore the fact that you wanted me to kiss you last night? You even closed your eyes and everything.’

‘That’s not even true, that’s not what happened. I thought you were gonna kiss me, and I didn’t wanna see it happen.’

He pulled away instantly, grabbing the ice cream again before turning around, clearing his throat. He wouldn’t make that mistake. He wouldn’t ruin the little progress he managed to make. He wouldn’t let his hope get the best of him and do something stupid that he would for sure regret.

The blond walked to get two bowls, not letting his thoughts wander as he distributed the fruit

between both bowls before adding the ice cream. He went to get some spoons next, placing one in each cup before turning to see his friend again and hand him his. George was still against the counter.

“Food’s ready,” he mumbled, taking a few steps closer to him again. But the boy didn’t respond. He was still, and silent, seemingly lost in thought. “George?” Again, no answer. The brunet didn’t even look at him. His expression was blank, nothing he could read, staring at a random spot on the floor with lips slightly parted. “George,” he called him again, slightly louder this time.

The Brit snapped out of it, glancing at him. And the American almost wished he didn’t, a sour feeling appearing in his stomach to how broken his best friend suddenly seemed.

“Sorry,” the boy whispered, reaching to grab his bowl. “Thanks.”

The brown eyes weren’t glossy, nor watery, yet he still seemed like he was about to cry, a sense of sadness he’s never seen before on him now evident in each of his features. And Clay wanted to ask, he wanted to understand why the sudden change and how he could fix it. But before he could, George spoke again.

“How long does it take?” He blurted out, both urgency and defeat in his tone as pleading eyes found his own. A look that begged for something, something he couldn’t understand. “How long is it to be happy with just once, after you get it? To stop wanting more?”

And now, he was speechless. The bitter feeling grew, suddenly feeling like crying too.

Was he that obvious? Was it that clear that he hadn’t moved on as he said he would? Was he making George upset with his feelings? Was a normal friendship what George wanted and couldn’t get? Was that what he was hinting at? And had he ruined everything by showing he wasn’t ready to give him that?

“I... Don’t know,” he admitted in a whisper, feeling defeated. The brunet took a deep breath, eyes now fixed on his bowl of food.

“Maybe... Maybe you were right,” the boy mumbled, hands trembling lightly. “Maybe I need-maybe space is good.” Another deep breath, moving his hand to his own eyes to wipe away a tear about to fall. “Thanks for the food. I need- ‘m going to bed.”

Without giving him time to react, George suddenly headed out, leaving him standing there alone.

So many overwhelming emotions, he didn’t know what to feel.

All he understood was that his feelings were clearly affecting his best friend, and now he didn’t want to be around him. And maybe it was for his own good, maybe George thought by giving him space he could make it easier for him to move on. And maybe he was right, and he needed to be apart from him to be able to heal. But it hurt, it fucking hurt.

Oversleeping wasn’t something he did too often. He slept till late sometimes, yes, but because he went to bed late as well. However, sleeping all day was getting increasingly more attractive. Every time he opened his eyes the memories came back flashing, and forcing himself to go back to sleep was easier than dealing with heartbreak again.

He didn’t want to get up, he didn’t want to face reality. He didn’t want to accept he was so bad at concealing his feelings he had messed everything up. But he couldn’t stay in his room for a second

day in a row. He needed to prove to George and himself that he was able to get his shit together and make it work. He needed to save their friendship. No matter what it took, and no matter what he felt or happened or could happen. He refused to lose him. He refused to lose his soulmate.

Platonic was good enough.

But despite spending the whole afternoon and a big part of his night downstairs, the brunet never came. Even when the clock marked one in the morning, the boy never appeared. He didn't see him the next day either. And as another night came with no news of his friend, watching Sapnap get double his normal amount of food before heading upstairs, it finally hit him just how seriously the Brit had taken the whole giving him space thing.

And it hurt. It hurt that the younger of them all wasn't checking on him half as much, too, suddenly feeling completely alone in the house.

To be fair, it's not like Sapnap was ignoring him. He sat next to him, made him company, and patted his shoulder in a reassuring way here and there when Clay seemed to be drowning in self-pity. But he didn't ask once if he was okay, or what happened.

He could only assume George had told him enough. Or maybe he didn't, this was the brunet they were talking about. But probably seeing the boy locked in his room and the so-called best friends not interacting was enough to get the general idea that they weren't on the best terms possible.

And he was happy that the Brit was at least getting food and had someone checking on him. But God, he needed a friend right too, he needed someone to rely on. He considered calling Bad, but desisted last second, deciding that involving more people was probably not the best idea. He needed to give it time. But he couldn't handle it.

Seeing his last text message with the older boy was three days ago, seeing as hours passed and another day went by without talking to him, seeing as once again it was only Sapnap and him at breakfast. He couldn't handle loneliness; he couldn't handle the guilt. He needed to say something before he lost his mind and barged into the boy's room without warning just to apologize and beg him to be his friend again.

He needed to figure out what to do. He needed advice, he needed guidance. He needed a friend before his own thoughts consumed him and made him crazy. So, without really thinking, overwhelmed with the weight he had been carried and simply reaching his limit, he abruptly blurted out.

"I'm George's soulmate."

A choking noise.

Clay's eyes widened as he watched Sapnap sputter and spill his milk all over himself and the table, coughing right after and hitting his own chest.

"Shit, I'm sorry- are you *okay*?"

"You're *what*?" The boy instantly asked with a raspy voice, ignoring his question completely as he grabbed some napkins to clean the mess. The blond got a few as well, helping him out.

"I'm George's soulmate," he repeated, realizing what he was doing then hitting him. They never really agreed to anything, but he was certain neither the brunet nor him had told anyone about their status until now, and he wasn't sure he was allowed to. "I'm- we're soulmates but... I messed up, Sap, I crossed a--"

“Are you joking?” His friend interrupted, still looking completely taken back. “You’re- you two are soulmates? For real?” The blond nodded in response. “How is the first time I’m hearing about this, I’m- oh my god.”

The blond sunk on his seat, now feeling both guilty for keeping that information from the boy and worried of whatever reaction the brunet could have to their roommate now knowing. He opened his mouth to talk, but the younger boy spoke before he could.

“So that’s what he meant by seeing if it felt different now that things changed... I thought he meant living together, I- holy shit. Everything makes way more sense now.” The boy huffed in amusement, Clay blinked a few times, suddenly lost in the conversation.

“What are you...?”

“Okay, hold on, go back. So you two are soulmates.” Again, the blond nodded. “Then why- What are you doing, Clay? Do you just, don’t want to be his soulmate or what the fuck wrong?” And he blinked again.

“I do?” He said, confusion clear in his tone. “Why are- What do you mean?”

“No, but, I mean romantically.” Sapnap clarified. “Not like I’m judging or anything, I just wanna understand the whole story. If you tried but couldn’t see him that way...”

“What?” The taller boy frowned, notoriously disoriented. “I do, I... I like him, Sap. George’s the one that doesn’t.” And now, his friend was the one blinking, seemingly taken back before confusion took over his features.

“George doesn’t...? Hold on, *what?*”

“Yeah, he wants to be platonic soulmates.” He sighed, closing his eyes for just a second to prepare himself to finally tell his story. “I tried, Sap. I tried to show him we could be more, but he kept rejecting me and-”

“*Rejecting-*? Clay,” the brown-haired cut him off, talking with a serious tone, now seemingly annoyed for some reason. “Did he say that?” He then asked, making the blond blink as before. “Did George say he wanted to be platonic?”

“Um, he said we obviously were, so...”

“Yeah, fine, but did he say he *wanted* to be just that?”

Clay went quiet. He took a moment to remember, going word by word over what his friend told him that day, when they first met. He stayed silent for a few seconds, before shaking his head slowly.

“... No, but...”

“Did he, at any point, say he didn’t want more?” His roommate asked. “Like, when he *rejected* you, did he say he didn’t like you?” For some reason, his friend’s tone made his stomach twist, anxiety pooling inside him.

“Sapnap, why are you-”

“*Did he?*”

He went quiet again, unsure of how to answer. He took some time to think again, to go over his memories, to find the words he needed to hear.

“He- He said we were friends, and that he knew things didn’t change just like that and- and that liking someone just because they’re your soulmate it’s not... He said we didn’t mean I love you the same way, he-”

“God, Clay.” The boy sighed in frustration. “Did it ever occur to you that it wasn’t because *he* didn’t like *you*?” A weird feeling formed in the mouth of his stomach, his heart suddenly beating faster. “I mean, did you even tell him *you* wanted to be more than platonic?”

“I... Kind of? I mean, it was obvious, why else would I-”

“*Obvious?* Bro, this is *George* we’re talking about.” His friend sighed again. “Did you tell him or not?”

The blond swallowed hard, his mind slowly starting to connect the questions, and a thought forming as memories began to invade him without having to look for them.

‘I mean, I’m not saying we aren’t platonic soulmates...’

He was scared, he was scared of admitting it and being rejected. So he always went around saying those exact words. No matter what he did, he made sure to not say them.

‘If we don’t feel anything, then we’re definitely platonic, like, for sure.’

Even with his own suggestions, even with that first kiss. Even avoiding saying how it felt for him, expecting the boy to be the brave one.

‘So, platonic?’

Even when it felt like the tension was too clear to be ignored. Even when George’s words felt like a hidden invitation, like he expected more.

‘I want an apple too.’

‘... Anything else?’

‘I’m good.’

No matter how much it sounded like there was something being said between the lines, he didn’t dare to say what he thought out loud.

‘Wanna watch a movie?’

‘I’m... I’m editing.’

Not even correcting the boy when he was wrong in his thoughts, assuming the reasoning behind the blond’s actions and seeing it as something that it wasn’t.

‘I was just- I wanted to...’

‘To know how it would feel?’

‘In a way, yeah.’

Even after he had the boy instigating him to keep going, even when he had him shaking and moaning his name. Even after he made him cum.

'Stop laughing.'

His stomach twisted again, suddenly feeling sick. He never said what he wanted, he never made it clear. He was so sure he would be rejected due his friend's first reaction, that he never admitted it or cared to ask how George truly felt. And every time the brunet showed any signs of possibly being into him, the blond seemed amused, letting his cockiness get the best of him.

"... I... I just thought..."

"You two are the stupidest people alive, I swear to god."

And more memories kept coming back to him, but this time, he read them in a completely different way.

'It sounds like you want us to be more or something.'

'Maybe I do.'

'You don't mean that. You've never wanted that before, why would you now?'

George told him. George directly told him he didn't think he meant it. And Clay never explained, he never explained why he wanted it now.

'I just don't see why anything would change just because we're soulmates. Liking someone because you're supposed to it's stupid. If you didn't like me before...'

He never corrected him, he never told him he did like him before but wasn't able to see it. He let the boy believe everything he was doing was just because they were soulmates.

'I wanted it. I want this.'

'What do you- what do you mean?'

'I wanted to kiss you. Sometimes when I look at you, all I wanna do is kiss you... George, you're my soulmate.'

Instead of admitting his feelings, he shielded on their shared bond. He said it as the reason, every single time. And the Brit getting tense, pulling apart and his mood changing whenever he mentioned the title, was probably because of that. And a rejection wasn't a rejection, it was a reminder he didn't want things to be forced. He didn't want Clay to like him because of fate.

'You said you've never been in love.' But the boy had been looking at him, when the question of true love was asked. He looked at him every time he said no one. Yet when he said he's never felt it, he didn't dare to look him in the eyes. *'I mean, it's possible, if you don't know a feeling...'*

'I know what love is, Dream. I know how to tell when I love someone.' He knew because he was lying, he knew because he had felt it. Yet he still let Clay explain it to him, he still let him do whatever he wanted to him. He still asked questions to get him to keep going and put himself at his mercy.

And why would he do that, why go as far as to let him touch him, why sound frustrated when the blond didn't kiss him, if it's not something he wanted? But then Clay went and chuckled, then he

kept quiet once again. He let the boy believe it was the first kiss situation happening all over again.

'I want- I want out. Whatever game this is, I'll end up losing.'

And George had told him. George directly told him he thought he was playing with him.

'Why are you doing all this? Would you have done any of it if you didn't know I was your soulmate?'

He directly told him what he thought his intentions were, and his reasons. But he was scared, so he protected himself and his feelings. And he took George locking himself in the room, and deciding to go clubbing, as proof he didn't want him.

'I wasn't really into him, anyways.'

'Then why were you gonna...?'

'I don't know. Thought it could help.'

He was hurt, and sad, and couldn't see past his own experience. He was dumb enough to assume, never ask anything. Even George, who wasn't the best at feelings, still made the questions he needed to, but Clay never gave him the right answer. And everything got messy. But he kept pushing it, his own selfish agenda that didn't take any hint or explicit word into consideration. And the boy kept listening to him, playing along with his stupid plans to see if the blond could feel something he was already feeling.

'What if once isn't enough? What if you've felt like that for so long, that once you give in you just... Get hooked forever? I don't know if I could let go. That's what's scary.'

'Could you let go the other way around? Like, if it's feelings you've had for a while... There's a reason they're not gone, right?'

He listened to him even when he didn't believe him. He tried everything the American wanted him to, showing the same hopeful eyes he never knew how to read.

'George, what do you- What are you doing?'

'Being brave.'

Clay had his head so far up his own ass, that he took every gesture, every action, every reaction, every hint, as the boy doing him a favor. He took George kissing him back, him grinding on his leg, kissing him first, pulling for more, as him doing him a favor. He took George hiding in his own room, red eyes from crying, and taking some space, as him being affected over breaking his friend's heart. But George wasn't doing it for him. George wasn't sad for him. Not everything revolved about him, and he completely neglected to see the brunet had his own emotions and fears.

And maybe the reason why George acted like *he* was the one taking what he wanted from him, when he rode him moving like he wanted to be pleased and demanded things like their shared moment was a fantasy of his, because that's exactly what it was. He kissed him like he needed it, touched him like he's been wanting to, because it was never just to comply and give Clay what he wished.

'Why do you never say it back?'

'Because... Because we don't mean it the same way.'

The boy had told him, he tried to be honest with him, but he didn't notice.

'I just slept with my best friend.'

'I'm... I'm more than just that to you, am I not?' And he was referring to being his soulmate, but that's now what it sounded to the British.

'That makes it worse, doesn't it?'

The blond swallowed hard, suddenly feeling dizzy.

'How long does it take? How long is it to be happy with just once after you get it? To stop wanting more?'

Because George wasn't talking about Clay. He was never talking about him. It wasn't for him, none of it was. It had never been just for him.

Oh, how could he have been so stupid? How could he have been so blind?

He heard every single one of his words, but he didn't listen.

"Sapnap," he instantly let out, feeling like he was about to throw up. "Does George like me back?" His friend stared at him, serious expression for a moment before giving him a sympathetic look.

"I can't answer that."

"Please," he begged. "Please, Sap, I need to know—"

"I don't think you should be asking *me* that, Clay."

The blond stopped talking. His friend was right. He couldn't keep avoiding that conversation any longer, not after all the chaos both of their half-assed sentences and lack of direct communication caused. He stood up without saying another word, quickly leaving the room and heading upstairs to the boy's room. He knocked on the door as soon as he reached it, heart beating faster than ever in his life.

"George," he let out, urgency in his voice. And this was it. This was *his* moment to be brave. It was his time to make things okay. Yet the boy didn't answer. "George?" He tried knocking again.

He waited for a moment, and a moment longer. He waited for what it felt like an eternity. Still no answer.

The blond hesitated before reaching for the doorknob, thinking the boy was most likely asleep but wanting to check just in case. He opened the door slowly, carefully peering inside once he did. But the brunet wasn't there. The bed was empty. The whole room was empty.

Clay's heartbeat raised, stepping inside and looking around as if that would change the truth.

George wasn't there.

He ran downstairs in an instant, barging into the kitchen and startling his friend.

"George's gone," he let out, all too hurried, panic in his voice.

“What?”

“He’s gone, he’s- he’s not in his room. He *left*.” The boy blinked a few times, still seemingly taken back. “Sap, he left!”

“There’s no way he left, we would’ve heard the front door. Did you look around?”

“Did I- *Yes*, I looked in his room and he’s not there, why aren’t you-”

“Just his room?”

“Where else would he be!? In our *gym*?”

The blond didn’t appreciate the amused expression his friend was giving him as he slowly stood up, completely calm as if he didn’t understand the possible implications of what was happening.

“Alright, this is what we’re gonna do. Imma go look around the neighborhood, and you’ll wait here in case he comes back... And check the rest of the house just in case.”

“No, I wanna go-”

“You don’t know where to look, I do. I’ve gone out with him more, haven’t I?” Clay opened his mouth to protest, but Sapnap was already heading out the kitchen. “Check everywhere, okay? I’ll be back soon.”

The tall boy blinked, then he heard the front door close. Shit. Fucking Sapnap. That wasn’t how he expected that to go.

It would’ve been better if they tried calling the boy first, but he didn’t think he would pick up if he was the one doing it. He needed the brown haired to do it, but he was gone.

With frustration growing and not knowing what else to do, he decided to listen to his friend and check the rest of the house, starting with the home gym they had in the basement just out of pettiness. Obviously, the brunet wasn’t there. Clay sighed, still walking around pointlessly.

How did things get so messed up? Why would his soulmate leave like that, without a warning?

All he wanted to do was to finally make things right, confess his feelings and ask the right questions. All he wanted was to have the boy by his side. All he wanted to do was make up for all the lost time he wasted by following plans and playing stupid games instead of being honest and upfront.

He wanted his best friend back. He wanted to love his soulmate.

The blond sighed, looking through the window absently. He looked at their pool, and the red flowers growing by the side. He looked to the pool chairs, right beside their only tree. He looked to their bushes, full of small flowers they didn’t know would blossom when they bought the house. He looked at the boy sitting next to them, so beautiful it felt like he belonged in that garden.

His eyes widened abruptly.

George.

George, with his pretty brunet hair moving with the wind. George with his petite figure, as delicate as always. George with his pale skin, pink lips and rosy cheeks. George, the most gorgeous boy he’s ever met. George, sadness in his face and lack of smile on his lips.

Before he could stop himself, he grabbed his phone, dialing his friend's number.

He couldn't wait anymore. He couldn't wait one second longer. He watched the small figure look at his phone, confusion in his features and seemingly hesitating before moving the mobile closer to himself. *Pick up, pick up, pick up-*

"Dream?"

"George." Relief was evident in his voice, his heart beating fast as he turned around to leave the room.

"Dream, why are you calling me? What's-"

"George, I need you to listen to me, okay?" He walked through the small corridor hurriedly to reach the stairs.

"What do you-"

"Please, just, let me talk for a minute," he begged. His friend got quiet for a second, before humming.

"Okay...?"

The blond began to claim the stairs, taking a deep breath. He wasn't going to hold back anymore, he wouldn't let himself ruin it this time.

"I like you" he blurted out. And the other side of the line went silent.

He could feel his heart beating out of his chest, opening the door to get to the hallway of the first floor. He took a few seconds to regulate his breathing, before heading to the other side of the house.

"I like you, I've liked you for a long time. I- I don't even know how long," he continued, realizing the brunet wasn't going to respond. "I like you, not just as my friend, but as more. I like you so much I don't know what to do with myself."

"You... Like me?" The boy finally whispered, notoriously incredulous.

"I do, and I was stupid for not saying it sooner, for not realizing sooner too."

He turned around the corner as he reached the kitchen, walking past the stairs to the second floor and heading straight to the glass door in the living room to go outside.

"Over the internet, over the phone, it was easy to lie to myself. It was easy to tell myself it was just a friendly crush, and push my feelings aside, pretend they weren't there so I wouldn't ruin our friendship." He finally reached the door, opening it quietly, seeing that now the brunet was standing but still looking at the flowers. "But then you came here, and I saw you... And we *touched*. And God, George, I couldn't keep lying to myself. I finally understood what my feelings meant, what they truly were."

He stepped outside, but stopped walking next, not wanting to alert the boy just yet. He simply stared at him, at his beautiful silhouette.

"I don't like you because we're soulmates, George. Finding out we were simply helped me see what was already there, and *always* has been there." He took a deep breath, closing his eyes. "And

everything I did, it was to try and awaken those same feelings in you... But you already had them, didn't you? I was still the blind one, wasn't I?"

"Dream," his friend choked out, taking a shaky breath. "I-" A deep breath next. "You *like* me?" He still sounded just as doubtful, as if it was hard for him to believe it.

"I do," he assured. "I do, and I'll do whatever I need to do to prove it." And he meant it. Every single word. No matter what he had to do, no matter how long it took. He would make sure he erased every trace of uncertainty. He would show his soulmate how he felt. "George," he whispered. "Turn around."

The brunet followed his words. The blond hung up the phone. Their eyes locked, shocked expression meeting longing one.

The American took a step closer, then another. The British mimicked his actions, walking to him. Clay increased his pace, running to reach the boy. George hurried his steps as well, eyes still widened and lips slightly parted.

They stopped just centimeters apart, standing facing each other right next to the pool. The tall boy placed his hands on the smaller man's cheeks, cupping them softly. He rubbed his thumbs over his skin, a warm smile appearing on his face as he moved closer.

"George," he whispered as before. "I'm in love with you."

"Dream," his soulmate choked out again, eyes glossy and a hundred emotions on his face.

"I love you." He pressed their foreheads together, closing his eyes as he took a deep breath. "I love you, we mean it the same way."

"Dream," a shakier tone, trembling hands placing over his own.

"I'm sorry it took me so long... I'm sorry I didn't listen to everything you said to me," he mumbled, opening his eyes again. "I'm here, and I'm ready to hear you now, I won't mess up any-"

Soft lips against his shut him up.

It was quick, it was gentle, it was faint. Just a couple seconds before the boy had pulled away again. But it was everything he needed and more.

"I love you too."

And it was like an explosion, it was like a universe being born. The world made sense again, and every empty space was now full. It was only four words, one simple sentence. But he would keep them in his memory as the biggest treasure he had ever been given.

The blond let his fingers wipe the small tears falling down his soulmate's cheeks, ignoring the ones forming in his own eyes. He smiled at the boy, the brunet offering him a shy one in response. And then, he laughed.

He laughed, because he was so fucking happy he didn't know what else to do. He laughed because the whole thing was nonsensical and stupid and they both sucked at communicating. He laughed because everything was over, and now everything was beginning. He laughed because what the fuck, they truly managed to find the most complex way possible of getting together.

"I can't believe we had sex before we confessed," he let out, getting a snort from the Brit.

"Your fault," the boy instantly mumbled. The blond wheezed in response.

"Okay, *to be fair*, you weren't- I mean, you didn't confess either, so like, it was a *team effort*."

"No. You suck and it's your fault."

"Oh, I suck?"

"Yeah."

"Really?"

"Mhm."

"Okay then." He pulled his hands away, looking down to the boy's pants before placing one hand on the waistline. The brunet's eyes widened instantly.

"What are you doing-"

"I mean, since you think I suck..."

"Oh my god you're an idiot," the boy groaned, turning half of his body to the side and taking a step back to distance himself. "That's not- why would you even take it that way? It doesn't- It makes no sense, you're stupid-"

"Come on, George." He took a step closer, the boy moved back again. "Let me show you just *how much* I suck, and how *good* I am at it."

"No, go away."

"Who wouldn't want to suck GeorgeNotFound, am I right?" He tried to get closer again, the boy shifted once again.

"You're literally an idiot, stop."

Clay let out a loud wheeze, his soulmate laughing as well, both knowing he wasn't serious yet still keeping the playful cat and mouse chase. The blond reached to grab the brunet's hand. The Brit tried to move away again. But this time, there wasn't ground under his feet as he stepped back.

His eyes widened, holding onto the tall boy out of instinct, making him lose balance as well. George pulled him with him, both boys failing to find a way to stop their movement. A loud splash resonated in the backyard as they fell into the pool.

The brunet instantly pushed him away under the water, hurriedly swimming up to get his head out to the surface. The blond did the same, soon enough both inhaling deeply as they tried to get some air into their lungs. The boy moved his wet hair away to be able to see, groaning in annoyance. Clay began to wheeze again instantly.

"S not funny," his soulmate complained, but there was a hidden smile in his tone. "Stop laughing." But not a second later, the Brit was chucking too. The blond moved closer, wrapping his arms around him and pulling him into a hug.

"I love you so much," he said, holding him tightly. The brunet wrapped his arms around him as well, hiding his face on his shoulder.

"I love you too," the boy whispered. And God, he already knew he would never get tired of hearing him.

They stayed like that for a few more seconds, before Clay carefully pulled away, just enough to look at him. He placed one hand on his cheek, caressing it softly before moving down and connecting their lips.

The kiss was as gentle as before, but he let it last longer. He allowed himself to savor it, to treasure every single second of it. George deepened the kiss slightly, moving his mouth to make their lips dance together. Clay hummed into the kiss, slowly moving them until the brunet had his back against the pool's wall. The boy wrapped his arms around his neck, tongue licking his bottom lip to ask for access.

And the blond gave it to him. He would give him absolutely everything he wanted.

The soft movements began to grow greedier, small hands pulling him closer, bodies pressing together. Legs wrapped around his hips, a sense of urgency as their lips broke apart and immediately sought each other again. His own hands roamed the tiny frame, caressing his sides, squeezing his waist, getting soft gasps in response. And despite the cold of the water, his body felt warm.

George pulled him closer again, then tentatively rocked his hips. A wave of pleasure ran down his spine, groaning quietly and holding him by his waist tighter as he rocked his hips as well in response. The boy let out a soft sound into the kiss. The blond began to shift his hips more intentionally.

Feeling his soulmate growing hard against him was heavenly.

Soft sighs, coordinated movements, mouths still dancing together. He grinded on the boy he loved with fervid desire, his surrenders disappearing and the pleased sounds clouding his mind, like nothing else mattered but the both of them, and feeling each other.

He broke the kiss, pressing his lips over the skin of his neck instead. The brunet moaned in response, gripping at his shoulders. And God, it felt good, it felt so fucking good.

"Dream," his lover whispered, taking a deep breath and biting his lips to suppress a noise. "We shouldn't- We shouldn't be doing this here."

The American hummed against his skin, nipping at it before biting softly, getting another moan as a reaction. He lifted his head to look at him next, not ceasing the movement of his hips.

"But you want to, don't you?" He asked in a whisper, despite knowing the answer. Well, if George initiating was anything to go by.

"But the pool," the boy mumbled, still trying to hold back his sounds. "Sapnap's gonna-"

"Don't talk about Sapnap right now."

George's eyes widened to the harsh tone in his voice, not expecting to be cut off like that.

"But-"

"George."

The blond grabbed his jaw with one of his hands, making him stare directly into his eyes. The Brit

instantly went quiet, eyes growing even bigger and cheeks flushing red. He pushed the brunet against the pool's wall some more, rocking his hips harder.

"Say my name," he demanded. The boy whimpered in response, still looking at him like a deer caught in headlights. So he thrust harder. "Say it."

"Dream," he let out in a shaky voice.

"My *name*."

"Clay," he finally said.

"That's better."

The blond smirked, shifting his hips harshly a couple more times before letting go of his jaw and using that hand to pull the brunet's pants down, enough to take his hard dick out, repeating the actions with his own next before moving closer and pressing their members together. He wrapped his hand around both of their lengths, quickly beginning to stroke them. George moaned instantly.

"Oh god, oh fuck- *Clay*-"

"Yeah, like that," the tall boy whispered, his fingers moving up and down at a fast pace, getting broken whimpers in response. "I'm making love to you, George. Do you really want me to stop?"

"*No*."

The blond connected his lips to the brunet's neck again, licking and sucking at it. He marked him up so everyone would know he was his, painting his skin red before moving to a different spot, leaving love bites all over it. George was a moaning mess, shifting his hips to get more friction from his hand as he gripped at his shirt like his life depended on it. Clay quickened his pace, letting his thumb play with their tips before stroking them harder, tension building up inside him.

"Dream," the boy whined, breathing fast and heavy. He lowered his head, hiding it on the blond's shoulder, body trembling and sounds coming out helplessly. "Oh god, Dream, I- shit, I'm sorry, I can't-"

"You're close?" He interpreted the messy mumbles his soulmate barely managed to say, getting a nod in response. He tightened his grip, once again moving his hand faster as he felt himself approaching his release as well, moving his other one down as well and reaching for the boy's balls to massage them.

"Shit- Oh god, I'm gonna cum. *Clay*, I'm gonna-"

"Good," he simply whispered, knowing he couldn't hold back anymore either.

Just a couple more strokes, and George was shaking against him, a loud and high pitch moan coming out as he came. Clay followed him soon after, waves of pleasure flooding his body and mind going blank as the intensity of his orgasm took over him.

He slowly stopped his movements, letting go of their softening members as he panted heavily, his partner trying to catch his breath as well. And they stayed like that for a few moments, until he finally pulled apart, not crushing the boy against the wall anymore.

"I love you," he whispered, the brunet mumbling something barely coherent in response, making him smirk. Maybe he needed a bit more time to recover than him.

He leaned down, kissing his lips softly one last time before helping to pull his pants up, making sure both of their clothes were fixed then taking the boy's hand.

"Let's get out of here." His soulmate nodded in response, following him out of the pool and heading to the pool chairs so they could lay on them to try and get dry with the sun.

The moment his body touched the chair, he suddenly felt exhausted, finally being calm after the roller-coaster of emotions he's been on ever since George arrived. Finally, he was at peace. And he was happier than he's ever been.

"I used to take longer to cum."

His head instantly turned when he heard the boy, an amused chuckle escaping him because of all the reactions he expected from him once he finally wasn't too out of it, saying that surely wasn't one.

"Take longer?" He asked. George nodded, then shrugged.

"It was just, harder? It took me some time" he mumbled. "But with you- it's just-"

"Faster?"

"*Different*," he corrected, cheeks blushing lightly, although they both knew the blond was right too. "It just, feels different." The tall boy hummed, offering him a prideful smile.

"Maybe that's because you didn't like whoever made you cum before, not like you like me."

"Yeah," the boy said, shrugging again. And now Clay was the one blushing, heart beating faster. Because he didn't expect him to actually agree with him, not that easily. "I guess it's hard to like people when you're already in love with someone else."

Nothing in the world could wipe his smile off his face. His chest felt warm, looking at his soulmate with loving eyes. Because George had been loving him for a long time, and he could finally be open about it. Because he's never heard him be so honest about how he felt. Because George trusted him with his feelings, and thoughts, and things that mattered to him.

And he loved that. And he wanted to give him the same. He wanted to be open, and trust, and be honest, until they learned how to communicate. He wanted to feel just as happy as he was now, and he wanted to make his soulmate happy as well. And he wanted to be with him, and make every little thing feel different and better for him.

He wanted to give George all of him. He was so fucking in love with his best friend.

They only went inside the house again once their clothes weren't dripping. Still noticeable wet, but not enough to risk making a mess. And as soon as they stepped in the living room, the front door by the kitchen opened, their roommate finally coming back after around an hour. They locked eyes, Sapnap raised an eyebrow.

"The fuck happened to you guys?" He questioned, not a trace of surprise or relief that George was there in the house. Well, it shouldn't be surprising. He told him to look around better, after all.

The blond let out a soft chuckle, shrugging softly.

"We fell into the pool," he simply said, the short boy snorting in response before moving closer, letting himself fall into the couch but still with his eyes glued on them.

“So...?” He asked. The brunet furrowed his eyes in confusion, but the blond knew what he meant, reaching for his partner’s hand and holding it with his own.

“So.”

“About time, thank fucking *god*,” his friend let out, the tall one wheezing in response. The Brit blinked a few times, but then, he seemed to finally connect the dots, face growing a cute shade of pink. “You two owe me, big time.”

Both him and his lover scoffed in response, the brunet rolling his eyes and pulling his hand to make him walk, heading to the stairs. But right before they reached it, he remembered something, turning around to look at their roommate again.

“Hey, you should stay away from the pool for today,” he mumbled. “We had sex in it.”

George’s face fell, eyes widening and face turning bright red.

“*Dream*.”

“Of course you did, assholes,” Sapnap groaned, sighing in frustration after, as if he was planning to use it or something when they both knew that was probably not the case. “I swear to god, if you start fucking around the house I’m moving out.”

“*Oh my god*,” the brunet whined in embarrassment, his free hand covering half of his face and he shook his head. “We won’t-”

“Can’t make any promises,” Clay interrupted, shrugging again; hiding his amusement as he watched the horrified expression on his soulmate's face.

“*Dre*- Okay, we’re leaving,” the boy declared, obviously mortified with the conversation, pulling at his hand again to make him follow him upstairs.

The blond simply wheezed, letting the smaller man guide him.

George’s chest moved slowly as he breathed, his warm body pressed against him, curling up by his side. Clay kept an arm wrapped around him, the other petting his hair softly, letting him relax. He could feel his eyelids threatening to shut, so calm that sleep was trying to call him. But he wanted to stay awake for a moment longer, enjoy being next to his lover after spending so many days apart. Enjoying not having to hold back from showing him affection.

Lover. Soulmate. Partner. Best friend. Titles were slowly feeling unnecessary, now understanding that what truly mattered was the feeling behind, and being on the same page. And he knew that they were.

The brunet yawned, bringing his hands to his face to rub his eyes.

“Tired?” He asked, getting a nod in response.

“I should probably get going.” The blond raised an eyebrow to his words, giving him a questioning look. “What?”

“Well, I kinda thought... I mean- Okay, I just... Why don’t you stay here with me?”

“Here?” The boy questioned, the American nodding a few times. The Brit opened his mouth to

talk, but closed it right away. He raised an eyebrow again, because obviously the boy wanted to say something.

“What is it?”

“I... Don't wanna have sex.”

The blond blinked a few times, then faked a pout, mumbling playfully.

“Never?”

George scoffed, rolling his eyes and shaking his head.

“No, idiot. Just, not tonight,” he mumbled. But then, he hesitated, nervously playing with his own hand. “Or... In a while?” But right after he said it, he hurried to speak again, clearly anxious about saying that out loud. “It's just, the way we did things- I mean, I- Not like, I just think-”

“It's okay,” he cut him off, instantly offering him a reassuring smile.

Because despite the awkward mumbling, he understood. They moved too fast, did things too soon, and for all the wrong reasons. And even though neither of them regretted it, and they still treasured their firsts together, now that they were finally *together*, things were different. And he wanted to enjoy the process of learning to love each other properly, too.

“We can take it slow.” He pet his hair some more, moving down to kiss his forehead. “I just want to spoon you, maybe cuddle too” he assured. “I want to sleep with you, just sleep.”

“Just sleep,” the boy repeated, before shyly nodding. “I want that.”

Because despite all the hurried intimacy, they lacked the domesticity. And they were both eager to explore that side too, let their relationship grow as it should, at the pace that came naturally without trying to prove points or change things. Because at the end, by trying to change each other's minds, they almost lost it all. Because they both wanted the same, after all.

Clay grabbed his blanket, pulling it to cover both with it. The smaller boy wrapped his arms around him, nuzzling against his chest. He liked that. He wanted that to be a part of their routine.

“I love you,” he mumbled, kissing his partner's head.

“I love you too.”

He definitely wouldn't get tired of hearing him say that.

George loved him, and he finally was okay saying it. And that, to be honest, was all he needed.

Because it was him, it had always been him. It was who made his affection grow, filling his heart full. It was his biggest reason to smile, at every hour of the day, wanting to spend as much time by his side as possible. The person he would do everything for, and he knew the boy felt the same. Not someone to complete him, but complement his sense of fulfillment. And all the wishes and hopes of a life shared together, had now a different meaning.

Because in retrospect, it was inevitable. This was always the outcome for them. It was always how they would end up. Even if they managed to make the road to reach that point harder than it was supposed to be. Even if they proved free will was still more important than fated connections. They chose each other.

Because they were *soulmates*, but more than that, they were best friends. And they were *them*. Dream and George. And to no one's surprise, they had fallen in love with each other.

Chapter End Notes

so... this is it, we've reached the end, with a particularly long chapter to make the goodbye last a little more :) this fic was truly a journey, and im super thankful that you decided to give this story a chance

reading your comments was so special to me, seeing how some people figured out the plot twist as the chapters went on and seeing how others were still confused really made this experience so enjoyable for me, because the point of a plot twist is giving enough hints so you can see it but not making it so obvious everyone expects it, and i feel like it worked as i was hoping it would

im a bit sad its over, i had fun writing this version of dnf haha but im also glad theyre finally happy together, so yay for them :D

anyways, thank you guys again, i truly appreciate all the support <3

see you in the next fic, maybe? :]

[twitter](#)

[tumblr](#) (havent been using it yet but i might)

[Change your mind spotify playlist](#) (songs from both pov)

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!